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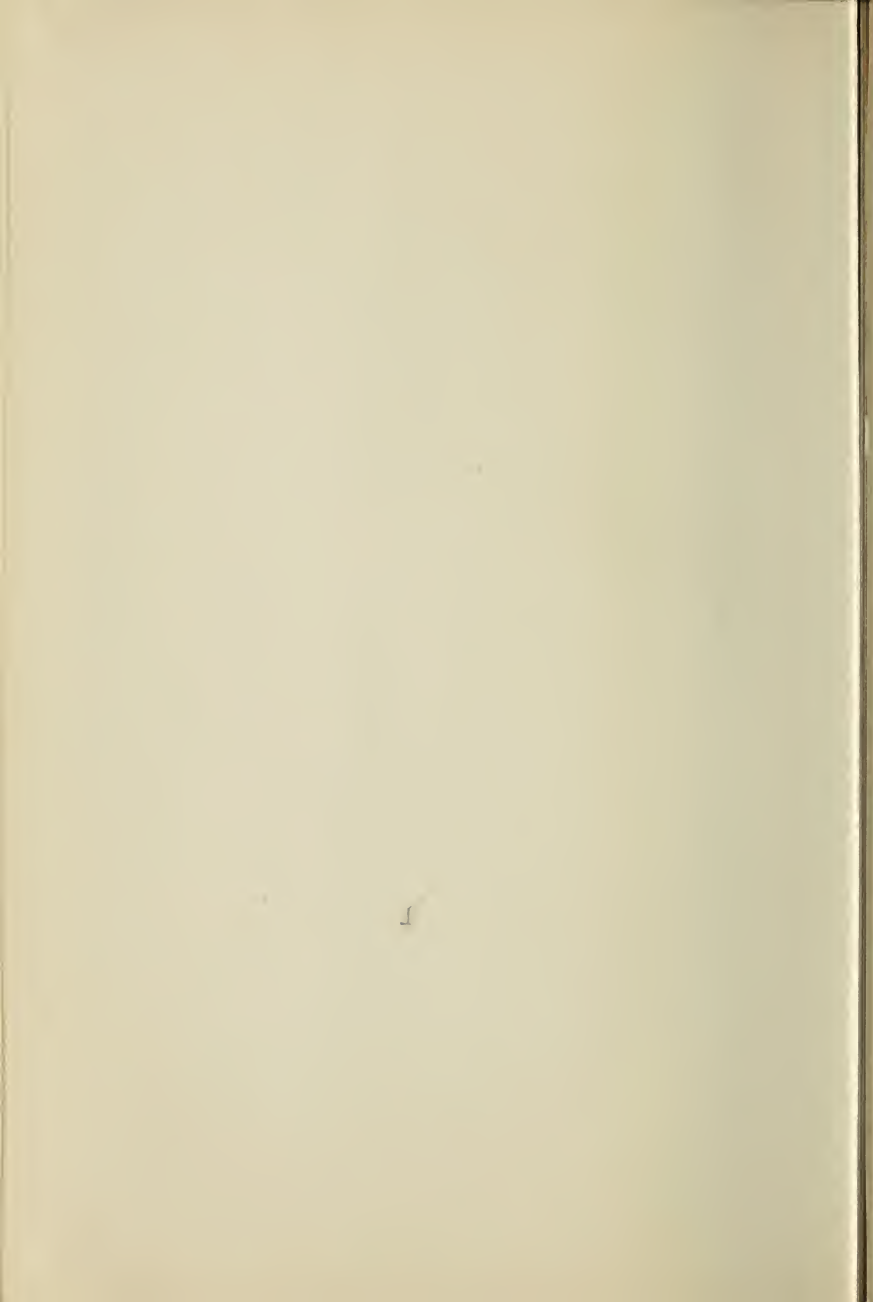
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LETTERS

TO

CARDINAL McCLOSKEY,

ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK.

BY

REV. JAMES A. O'CONNOR,

FOR MANY YEARS A ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST; NOW PASTOR OF
THE REFORMED CATHOLIC CHURCH, NEW YORK.

FOURTH EDITION.

TENTH THOUSAND.

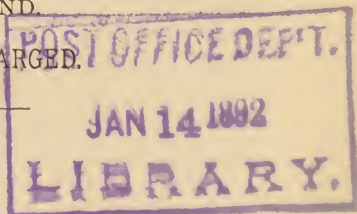
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PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

The Letters contained in this volume have attained a popularity little dreamed of by their author when he began their publication in a religious newspaper. The matter contained in them was prepared from week to week for sermons and lectures in the line of his duty as pastor of the Reformed Catholic Church; and it was thrown together in this popular form for the purpose of reaching those for whom they were chiefly designed—the Roman Catholics. They have had a wide circulation, and have done much good to Protestants and Roman Catholics, in breaking down the walls of prejudice, bigotry and superstition. Many Roman Catholics have been enlightened by them regarding the deceptions of the Church of Rome, and have found the true way of salvation by faith in Christ, as it is pointed out in them in various places; while many Protestants have had their hearts warmed by the tone of kindness and love for the poor victims of Rome's delusions that runs through them. If the questions at issue between the Word of God and the Church of Rome can be discussed in a friendly manner, and Protestants and Roman Catholics can be induced to "argue" them in a neighborly and Christian way, the truth of God will prevail and the downfall of Rome is assured. As a help toward this desirable end this volume has done its part in the past, and it is hoped will do yet more in the future. May Almighty God bless this and every effort that seeks only his glory and the salvation of souls, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

J. A. O'C.

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INTRODUCTION.

The letters of the Rev. James A. O'Connor to Cardinal McCloskey, which are brought together in this volume, appeared serially in the *New York Weekly Witness*, and were, I have reason to believe, perused with deep interest by a large class of its readers ; as also by many Roman Catholic priests and laymen to whom the papers were lent or sent by a number of subscribers to the *Witness*.

I may add that I read with pleasure these instructive letters, as they appeared, and hope that they will enlighten many readers in the future as they have done in the past on the questions at issue between the Church of Rome and the Bible.

JOHN DOUGALL,

Editor "New York Weekly Witness."

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FATHER O'CONNOR'S
LETTERS TO
CARDINAL McCLOSKEY.

LETTER I.

SIR:—I address you in a reasonable and respectful manner, to call your attention to some matters of the deepest importance to all who believe in God and wish to serve him. You are the head in this country of an organization that claims to be the only true Church of Christ. There are other religious societies that make the same claim, but you say they are heretical, and that yours is the only genuine one containing the whole truth.

Until a few years ago I was an active worker in that organization, and exercised to the full capacity the power that some of our population suppose a priest to possess. You must concede that only a small proportion of the people of this country believe in such power. Yet their number is so considerable that you and 6,000 other priests find it very profitable to humor them in their delusion. It is known of all men that the class of

people that believe in you and your system of religion are the least intelligent of the population. Here and there throughout the country an educated and refined man or woman will be found who believes in this system, but they are very few indeed, and they could well dispense with your ministrations. But the common people, the working people of the country, need to be uplifted by some means from the sinful lives that they are leading. You say that you and your Church can do it if they will come to you. They have been coming to you and your predecessors for centuries, and why do you not do it? If you possess the power of reconciling poor sinners to their offended Creator, why do you not make good your claim by using it with effect?

It is the belief among your followers that no one can approach the Almighty except through the door of the Roman Catholic Church. You claim that you and your priests are the divinely appointed door-keepers of heaven. Why don't you pass in the poor people that come to you?

What would be said and done to a man who had in his possession a secret remedy by which the life of our late President Garfield would have been prolonged for many years, and yet who would not impart this secret? The whole civilized world would rise up as one man and denounce such a creature as the most infamous of beings. If he claimed to have such a remedy and found

many persons to believe in him, and had been given an opportunity of testing it and yet failed to restore our beloved President to health, what a cry of indignation would go up from the whole land that he was only a quack in medicine.

My dear Cardinal, so many people have tried the remedy for their souls that you say you possess without any benefit to them, that their cry that you are a quack in religion is rising very high indeed. Your system has had a fair trial for many centuries. Honest though sinful hearts have come under its sway to be lifted up from the wretchedness and misery that sin has brought upon them. Young minds have been opened to its influence that they may receive light; men and women in the prime of life have asked for more strength and help to resist the evil that presses around them, and old age, with its tottering steps, has knocked at the door to obtain rest and peace. All have been disappointed, and many are now examining your claim to possess a remedy for the sins of their souls. I shall be their mouth-piece in exposing those claims.

Very truly yours,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER II.

SIR:—As we are strangers personally I beg to introduce myself. I cannot do so in a more concise manner than by submitting for your perusal the substance of a lecture I delivered in this city soon after I left your Church. It is a report taken from a religious paper published in this city:—

At a crowded service of the Independent Catholic Church in this city, the pastor, the Rev. James A. O'Connor, preached from Acts xxvi, 4, 5, 22, and 23. Applying the text to the subject of the discourse, which was, "My life as a Roman Catholic priest and my present position," he said that for the words Jerusalem and Jews he would substitute Ireland and the Irish, and for the word Pharisee in the fifth verse he would substitute Roman Catholic. These verses well expressed his position as a young Irishman and a Roman Catholic priest.

His family and friends were of old Roman Catholic stock, and even the strictest of the adherents of that Church. From his twelfth year he was destined for the priesthood by his parents as the most exalted position in life. A Roman Catholic priest was, as it were, a mediator between God and man, and the treasury of heaven

could be opened only by the priest for the laity. No higher position in this world, therefore, could be conceived than that of the priest who is the only medium known in that Church for the prayers of the people to reach the throne of grace. In his family was a venerable priest, the speaker's grand-uncle, Father Batt O'Connor, parish priest of Milltown, County Kerry. The speaker's own nephew was recently ordained a Roman Catholic missionary priest, and other near relatives, male and female, were priests and nuns. Trained up amid such surroundings, his manner of life from his youth was after the strictest sect of the Roman Catholic religion. Having made the preparatory studies in the Diocesan Seminary in Killarney, the delightful home of his early life, he proceeded to France and studied philosophy and theology in the great Seminary of St. Sulpice, Paris. As a young man he was filled with zeal for the salvation of souls, and, as he considered there was an abundance of priests in Ireland, he resolved to make America the scene of his priestly labors, as his countrymen were spreading over this new land by thousands every year. That he might be more thoroughly prepared for his ministry, he spent some time in the seminary of St. Francis, near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and then entered St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, which is conducted by the same society of priests who have charge of the Sulpician Seminary in

Paris. He was ordained sub-deacon and deacon, in the seminary chapel in Baltimore, in 1871, and six months afterwards was ordained priest in Chicago, by the late Bishop Foley. He began his priestly life in the city of Chicago, and for eight years he labored in the ministry of the Roman Catholic priesthood in that city and other parts of Illinois. He faithfully tried to fulfil his duties as a priest, offering masses for the people, hearing confession, attending their sick-calls, ministering to all their spiritual wants, and taking a kindly interest even in their temporal affairs whenever he, as pastor, could help and benefit them. Lest, while preaching to others, he should be a castaway himself, he observed, in his own person, all the duties required of a Catholic and a priest; he said his mass every morning, went to confession every two weeks, paid daily visits to the parochial schools, and in every way was a live, active, zealous young priest. The example of older priests around him, which was not always good, had no effect upon him, and he continued for eight years, bravely working for the Irish Roman Catholic people, until he found that, as regards the moral elevation of his people and the influence of Christianity in their lives, his labors were in vain. Looking back from his present position, he thanked God that he retained his good character and reputation through all his ministry. He had seen priests around him be-

come intemperate through sheer recklessness and despair. Many of the priests of the Chicago diocese, while he was among them, were hurried into early graves from dissipation brought on by the tyranny and despotism of this hideous ecclesiastical system:—a system which makes them slaves until their hearts are broken, and they find what they consider a relief in sensual excess. Like many other priests around him, Father O'Connor began to see that the Roman Catholic Church was not all she professed to be. His observation led him to see a lack of fruit in his ministry and in that of his brother priests. If, he asked himself, the Roman Catholic Church was the Church Christ established on earth, with which he promised to abide forever, why did not the people who had such great faith in that Church show in their lives more evidence of their Christian profession? As a priest, he was continually handling sacred things, and giving them to the people who had a full and perfect faith in them and in him; yet he never experienced conversion of heart in his own person, nor did he see any evidence of it in any one of the thousands to whom he ministered. He gradually lost faith in the Sacraments which he was giving to the people, the mass, the confession, the eucharist, the extreme unction, and the other means of grace that the Roman Catholics so liberally used. Recognizing that he was in a false position, he re-

solved at all hazards to free himself from the deplorable state of hypocrisy in which he saw so many other priests spend their lives.

Accordingly he went to Cincinnati in May, 1878, where he obtained literary employment, and thence to Boston. From there he came to New York and, after his conversion to Christ, organized the Independent Catholic Church, in conjunction with other priests who had also renounced the teachings of the Church of Rome.

Thanks be to God, the people were coming in vast numbers to hear the simple doctrine of salvation through Christ alone preached by those who had been priests of that Church which was cheating the souls of her votaries and keeping them in a state of degradation, superstition and idolatry.

Yours truly,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER III.

SIR:—On Fifth Avenue in this city, covering the square between Fiftieth and Fifty-first streets, is a large white marble building known as “The Cathedral.” That building cost more than \$5,000,000. A great part of this sum was made up by the sale of whiskey, wine and beer in the

building at the great fair and bazaar held there a few years ago. You and your priests dispensed the liquor to the Irish people who freely drank it and paid double price for it, as they were told that the money was for the glory of God in building his house. The more they drank at that Fair the more pleased their God was supposed to be. A Christian man in your place would say, "The more Satan was pleased." But with you and your Church the end always and everywhere justifies the means. I leave it to any honest man to judge whether Christ or Satan reaped the fruit of that Fair. In the day when the eternal books are balanced we shall know how many young maidens and young men were sent on the road to destruction by that great "Fair and Bazaar." If I add that the City was cheated out of the land on which your Cathedral is built, as Dexter A. Hawkins, Esq., an eminent lawyer of this city, proves in his pamphlet, it may well be asked, how can you have the effrontery to call it the House of God? If the Saviour of the world were to come on earth again, would he enter there and set His seal upon the building as his temple?

I passed by your Cathedral the other day and observed that you are building a magnificent residence—a palace you call it, on the east side of of the square fronting on Madison avenue. It is not quite as fine a mansion as that of A. T. Stewart or William H. Vanderbilt, but it will be one

of the notable buildings in New York when completed in a style commensurate with the elegance in which you live. Whatever may be said of the pretensions of your Church to possess the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, no one will deny that you possess the keys of the treasures of the earth and the enjoyment of the good things of this world. When I was a youth in Ireland I heard my esteemed parish priest and relative, Rev. T. Enright of Causeway, County Kerry, say that it was generally believed, though it was not an article of faith, that Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, and priests, would occupy higher places in Heaven than the laity. The good, pious man and his congregation firmly believed it, as I did also, until I had been a member of the priesthood some years; but as I mingled with the bishops and clergy in this country, and observed their manner of life, my faith in their claim to a high place in Heaven was somewhat shaken. I saw, however, that you were bound to have as good a time on earth as grand palaces, costly furniture, fine carriages and goodly raiment can afford.

The people are told that all this is necessary to uphold your state and to preserve the dignity of your high calling as men of God and ministers of Christ. You do not pretend that you derive any authority for the use of these luxuries from the sacred Scriptures, however strained, or that you

were taught how to enjoy them when you sat at the feet of your teachers in the seminary. But being in the world you tell the people that you have to be all things to all men that you may gain as many followers as possible. This you learned from your master in Rome, and your promotion from priest to bishop and Cardinal has followed your compliance with his teaching. Though the people, the poor working-people of every land, have to pay for these luxuries, it is not to please them that you indulge in them. Apart from the personal gratification you derive from them, you use them as decoys to attract the worldly-minded and the wealthy by displaying your power and grandeur as princes and rulers of the people.

During a visit to Northfield, Mass., I met a Christian man, an ex-Judge of the Circuit Court of one of the districts in Illinois, who years ago had been a very active politician and a leader in the councils of the Democratic party. In conversation with him I learned many things concerning the intimate relations of your Church with political parties and the powers of this world. He told me candidly that he was first attracted to an alliance with the Roman Catholic Church by the display of power and permanency that she was everywhere making in America. There was something solid in the fine churches and institutions that were springing up in every city and town of the Union, which were owned by

the bishops alone. Protestant churches were being planted, too, but they were owned by the Christian citizens of each town, who could convert them into any use they pleased. But the people in the Roman Catholic Church had no control over the property they paid for. If not obedient to priest and bishop in all things, they could be excluded from the buildings they had erected. Where such power existed and was enforced, there must be strength and stability. So this politician and man of the world at that time judged, and with this knowledge he went into the councils of his party, and advised them, in all cases where they sought an alliance with Roman Catholic voters, to deal directly with the rulers of that Church. For many years he was the principal man in the secret committee appointed to treat with the bishop and priests in the great city where he dwells. The people were ignorant of this wire-pulling, but they obeyed their bishop and local pastors in what was commanded them, because they knew that though their votes would benefit a certain political party, their Church would be exalted and her power increased, and that in some way or other they would be partakers of its grandeur.

But those days are nearly past. A new generation of Irishmen has sprung up in America—the children of the emigrants of 1849 to 1852, who are not bound by the traditions that kept their fathers

obedient slaves to your Church. In the free institutions of the United States their minds have been expanded, and in the practical life of the Americans around them their native shrewdness has been quickened to such a degree that they see through your system, and are judging it on its merits, without attaching any weight to your claims of Divine right and infallible authority.

Very truly yours,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER IV.

SIR:—You recently consecrated to the Episcopate Rev. Father O'Farrell, late pastor of St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church in this city. The most notable event in the life of this gentleman has been the erection of the parochial schools attached to St. Peter's Church, where the children of the Irish people would receive a separate education. In his estimation the public schools, which have been the nurseries of Presidents, statesmen and men of note in America, were not of the kind or quality to elevate the Irish in this country. Virtually, Father O'Farrell said to the Irish people of his parish, "Do not send your children to the public schools,

lest they should grow up Americans. It matters not that this republic is greatest among the nations of the earth to-day, the children of Americans are not fit companions for your children ; do not associate with them, therefore, but keep separate and apart from them. In after years, when your children take their place in the world, to work out their destiny, it will be as servants to these Americans who now go to the public schools. But never mind that ; you are a superior race, and I will build school-houses for your children, where they will learn how to fit themselves for their duties. You Pat, and Mary and Bridget, who have come to America with honest hearts, seeking to better your condition in life, do not allow your numerous progeny to mingle with these Americans ; there is danger in the contact, and it will be a woful day for you when your descendants become like them. Here are my Roman Catholic parish schools, sanctioned by the Pope, where the traditions of Old Ireland are preserved, and where no Bible is taught. Send your children to me, and I will instruct them in their duties to the Pope and the 'Holy' Church that Ireland loves so well."

For his success in establishing parochial schools, and for this alone, Father O'Farrell has been distinguished among his co-laborers in the priesthood, and his reward has come from the

Pope's own hand in his elevation to the Bishoprick of the new See of Trenton, N. J.

Father O'Farrell received a very liberal education. He had been my predecessor as a student in the Seminary of St. Sulpice in Paris, France, and after his ordination he was a professor in the Sulpitian Seminary of Montreal, before he took charge of St. Peter's Church here. But all his culture and learning have been placed at the disposal of his sovereign Lord the Pope, as will be seen by the following oath that he took as he knelt before you in your Cathedral:

"I shall be from this hour thenceforward obedient to blessed Peter, the Apostle, and to the Holy Roman Church, and to the most blessed Father Pope Leo XIII, and to his successors canonically chosen. I shall assist them to retain and defend, against any man whatever, the Roman Popedom, without prejudice to my rank. I shall take care to preserve, defend and promote the rights, honors and privileges of the Holy Roman Church, of the Pope and of his successors aforesaid. With my whole strength I shall observe and cause to be observed by others the rules of the Holy Fathers, the decrees, ordinances or dispositions and mandates of the Apostolic See," etc.

I am not one of those who see danger to the Republic from your Church. The days are past when Rome could influence the fate of nations.

The old man in the Vatican has become a cipher in the political affairs of Europe, because the people are learning how to govern themselves. Yet, when we find men like you, Mr. Cardinal, and your bishops, vowing obedience to one who calls himself the Sovereign Pontiff, there is danger that the ignorant among your followers may become very good papists, but very bad citizens, and very bad Christians; when they see loyalty to the Pope made of more account than obedience to the Almighty or fidelity to the Government of the United States

In the above oath, Bishop O'Farrell did not promise God any faithfulness or integrity in the discharge of his duties, nor did he pledge himself to obey the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ, who claims unswerving fidelity from every Christian. To you and to every Roman Catholic bishop, priest, and layman, the Pope takes precedence of Christ, yet it is in the name of the Redeemer that you all speak to the Irish people. May God help them to get away from your influence and that of Bishop O'Farrell and his fellows, who seek to perpetuate the power of the Pope of Rome over them by arrogating to themselves the prerogatives of the Son of God. You, Mr. Cardinal, and the man you have laid your hands on to consecrate as bishop, know as well as I do that every human being who is conscious of sin and desires to turn from evil ways to the way of God

through the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. If you and your Pope and bishops and priests were swept off this globe to-day, every human being who crieth to the Lord in mercy would nevertheless receive the blessing of forgiveness and reconciliation. This I preach to my congregation of Roman Catholics, converted Catholics and Christians, every Sunday, and as I read this letter to them we shall pray that you may be led to ask of the Holy Ghost, what is the truth of God regarding the salvation of sinners?

Yours truly,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER V.

SIR:—A few months ago the New York papers contained a long notice of the marriage of a Roman Catholic priest, the pastor of a leading Roman Catholic Church in Brooklyn. On reading it, I wrote a letter to the papers which, with the original notice, caused some attention to be paid to the celibacy of the Roman Catholic priesthood.

It seems that Rev. Father Michael Goodwin, a Roman Catholic priest officiating in the city of Brooklyn, had fallen in love with a woman and—married her. What else would you have him do? It is the usage of society when a man of mature

years falls in love with a woman, and she reciprocates his affection, that they should get married in an honorable Christian manner, and live decently, as civilized nations have enjoined by their laws. This is the general custom. In the Christian Church, from the earliest ages, no man could be licitly ordained to the ministry who was not legitimately born of honorable public marriage. Dispensations may be, and have been, granted by your Church to the illegitimate children of Popes, Bishops and Princes, but that does not alter the law. You know, as well as I do in my own case, that you could not have been ordained a priest if your honored parents in Brooklyn, where you were born, had not been married according to Christian custom. But the case of Father Michael Goodwin was peculiar in many respects. He was a Roman Catholic priest ministering to a large congregation in Brooklyn; that is, hearing the confessions of all the people in his parish, offering up the sacrifice of the mass for them and attending to their spiritual wants. It was a great shock to the faith of the people in the Roman Church that one of their priests should get married. But there was something awful in the fact that he got married to a nun—the superioress of the convent in Brooklyn. It almost took away my breath when I learned this. Why, nothing of this kind had ever before occurred in America! To be sure some hundreds of years ago one Rev. Father

Martin Luther got married to a pious nun named Catharine Bora, and during the French Revolution priests and nuns got married. But it was as if a new reformation of the Roman Catholic Church was dawning that a priest and nun should get married in the "City of Churches," as Brooklyn is called.

There is a stern reality about this case. To make sure of it I sent one of our Independent Catholic priests to Brooklyn to learn the details.

This gentleman, Father McF, was in St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, with Father Goodwin, and naturally took a deep interest in the case. He saw the nun's sister, a married lady in Brooklyn, and she confirmed the whole story. After their marriage Father Goodwin and his nun-wife went to Philadelphia, where they are now living, and raising a family to the Lord.

A great uproar was created in Roman Catholic circles by this marriage. In the estimation of Roman Catholics this nun and priest had "broken their vows." As to the nun, her "vow" was a "simple" one, from which she could be released by the bishop; but it is generally believed by Roman Catholics that the "vow" of a priest like Father Goodwin could be annulled only by the Pope himself.

Now, it is known to you, Mr. Cardinal, and to every Roman ecclesiastic, that priests, at their ordination, or any time afterwards, do not make

a vow of celibacy. At their ordination, priests promise ("promitto") to be "chaste, temperate, and of good behavior," as the Apostle enjoins, and nothing more.

I well remember the time of my own ordination to sub-deaconship and deaconship in the chapel of St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, by Bishop Becker, of Wilmington, Del., June 29, 1871, and my ordination to the priesthood by Bishop Foley in Chicago, Dec. 23, same year. And I here publicly say that at no time did I make a vow of celibacy, nor did the score of young men who were ordained with me the same year from the same seminary. I have inquired of many priests who were ordained by different bishops in America and Europe, if they had made any such vow when they were ordained, and their answer was that they had not. I have consulted the *Pontificale Romanum* and manuals for the ordination of priests, and there is not in all of them any such vow exacted from those who present themselves for ordination.

History tells us that priests were married, despite fruitless attempts to enforce celibacy, made by Pope Gregory the Great in the sixth century, and other Popes and councils at various times, until Pope Gregory VII., called Hildebrand, in the year 1074, enacted a law that henceforward no priests should marry, and that those who then had wives should put them away. The clergy

rebelled, but Gregory had the civil power of all the kings of Europe at his back, and the priests were compelled to submit formally; though, like honest men, they were faithful to their poor wives secretly.

From the enactment of that unnatural law can be dated the corruption of morals in the Church. The subject is too indelicate to pursue at length. Suffice it to say that priests were like other men; that the injunction of the Creator to the first man and woman to "increase and multiply" touched them as it did Adam and Eve, and that if the law of the Pope could prohibit honorable marriage in priests and laymen it could not stifle the instinct of love that God had implanted in human beings, as well as in the animal kingdom generally.

I will close this letter by the statement that I am convinced if marriage had not been prohibited by one of your Popes in the eleventh century, no Reformation would be needed in the sixteenth century. If the priests of your Church were permitted by your laws to wed their mates in an honorable manner and build up homes and raise children to the Lord, the sweeping work that Almighty God gave into the hands of Martin Luther and his contemporaries to do would have been unnecessary. But through the centuries, from Gregory's tyrannical decree against the marriage of priests to the close of the fifteenth century, immorality among the clergy was prevalent

until its climax was reached in the person of the infamous Pope Alexander VI.

God bless the memory of Martin Luther, and keep it fresh and green in our hearts. His heroic fight against the corruptions of the Roman Church, and his brave example and encouragement to Catholic priests to hear the voice of the Lord calling on them to "come out of her, My people, and be not partakers of her iniquities," will forever endear him to all Christian peoples.

The Apostle Paul writes to his son in the faith, Timothy, counselling him in his ministry, and prophesying as follows: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meat." (I. Tim. iv.) If in this prophesy the Apostle had not in view the doctrines of your Church that calls itself Christian, I would like to know what other organization has been established in the world that answers to it.

Hopeful of your conversion ultimately, I am
yours respectfully,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER VI.

SIR:—The celibacy of the Roman Catholic clergy, to which I referred in my last letter, in connection with the marriage of Father Michael Goodwin to a nun in Brooklyn, is a subject of great importance to Roman Catholics. In this city and in all the cities and towns of the United States, the question arises continually, Why do not Roman Catholic priests marry like other ministers? In this letter I shall endeavor to throw some more light on the subject. Taken in its best aspects, it is a most unsavory topic, and as such it has been discussed by Protestant and Catholic writers at various times. I must confess it is with a feeling of pity I have turned away from the perusal of many books on this subject. The writers of such works begin with the assumption that all priests and nuns are immoral in their lives. The old spelling-book used to have the definitions: "Masculine, priest; feminine, nun." So it is not to be wondered at that the average human being should couple them together as in some respects man and wife.

Now it may startle some persons to learn from me that there is very little immorality between priests and nuns in Ireland, France or America, of which countries alone I can speak from expe-

rience. Putting aside the motive of adherence to their rules, one main reason why priests do not make love to nuns is because the latter are most frequently very undesirable beings. Another reason is that the good-looking and pretty nuns would be sure to tell. There was a notable case in Bloomington, Illinois, just before I went there, in 1872. Father D—— was appointed pastor of the Roman Catholic church in that town by Father Halligan, of Chicago, the Administrator of the diocese during the interregnum between the retirement of Bishop Duggan into the insane asylum of the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis, Mo., and the appointment of Dr Thomas Foley, of Baltimore, as Bishop of Chicago. Scarcely had Bishop Foley assumed the reins of government when he began to bring “order out of chaos,” as Bishop Becker, of Wilmington, Del., said in his sermon at the consecration of the former. One of his first acts was to remove Father D—— from Bloomington and send him out of the diocese. Bishop Foley kept his own counsel, and all the priests were puzzled to know “what was the matter with D——.” It could not be learned at first, but like all such things it came out in time. I had not been in Bloomington three months when I learned that Father D. had to leave the parish because he was so indiscreet as to put his arm around the neck of a pretty nun in the convent while hearing her con-

fession. It was the summer season, and perhaps the holy father wanted to brush away a fly from the fair round neck, or perhaps he only wanted to stretch his arm, which had become cramped from the position of supporting his well rounded and handsome chin. At all events the nun—she was a young one, and did not know any better—told her “extraordinary” confessor that Father D. had acted very queer at her last confession, and she did not care to go near him again. The “extraordinary” confessor was compelled to take action in the matter, and both Father D. and the nun were sent away.

Another case of priests and nuns getting into trouble in our day on account of “celibacy” was that of Father D——e, the pastor of a prominent church in Chicago. He was a brilliant young man, and was promoted to St. Patrick’s because of his shining qualities. While I was in the seminary at Baltimore I was shocked, in common with the other students from Chicago, to learn that Father D——e had been removed from his parish. After I was ordained priest, I inquired about the matter and the only thing I could learn was that he had been mixed up in the affairs of the Loretto convent that had been dissolved by Bishop Foley. The nuns were sent away and the mother superior became crazy. It was learned that regular orgies were held in the convent at night, and a stop had to be put to them when the neigh-

bors complained of the nuisance. (It is worth noting that the priests and nuns above referred to are still believers in the Roman Catholic faith).

There are many other cases of this kind, by no means edifying, that my memory could call up, but I will not refer to them. It is not an agreeable topic to discuss, however interesting it may be to you and your priests and nuns.

As a result of my discourse on this subject and my last letter to you, I received a scurrilous letter from a highly intelligent Roman Catholic inveighing against me for my assertion that the corruption of morals in the Roman Church had its origin at the time that Pope Gregory (Hildebrand) decreed, in 1074, that henceforward priests could not contract marriage. In that letter I merely quoted Roman Catholic history. Any reader can find in the libraries reference to this subject by Catholic and Protestant writers. Common sense tells us that such a decree as that of Gregory could no more make men and woman chaste than could a law enacted by any government in the world forbidding the birds of the air to mate together, be effectual in its results.

If you, Mr. Cardinal, would write your memoirs, and tell the truth in them, we would find therein what I have often heard from the lips of priests: "If I were not a priest, I would like to marry Miss So-and-So, for she is a very nice girl, and I

think would make a good wife." And how often have I heard ladies say of the good-looking clergymen of the Roman Catholic Church: "What a pity he is a priest." In like manner, it is sometimes said of some one of the poor women in convents: "What a pity she is a nun," though I must confess this is not often the case, for most nuns are very homely indeed. The public can see the best of them in this city begging in the rum-shops for the support of your churches and schools, and they are enough to make celibates of all men. No fact in history is better established, even by the testimony of Roman Catholic writers, than that gross immorality has gone hand in hand with the so-called celibacy of your Church. The number of ecclesiastics from the Pope downwards who have set the "celibacy decrees" of Gregory VII., at naught would make a small army. But you will say we live in times of purer morals now, and there is no corruption among the clergy and monastic orders. Certainly, Protestantism has a restraining influence on the morals of the Roman Catholic clergy, and there is not as much public scandal among the priests and nuns as there used to be. But beneath the calm surface there is a seething discontent among them that will ultimately break down the unnatural barriers that make them odious to themselves and out of sorts with mankind in general. The wretched lives that some of these priests and

nuns are now enduring cannot be borne much longer. A combination of circumstances causes them to remain in their present positions. They shrink from wounding the hearts of their parents and friends, and they fear the hounds of calumny that your Church would send after them. Their manhood and womanhood are undermined by your unnatural system of repression until they are like sheep when they come into the great world. But chiefest of all the reasons that keeps them slaves of your Church is that they do not know any other door by which they can enter heaven, rickety and soiled as the Roman door is. But a new light is shining before the minds of many of them, the light of the Gospel of Christ, pure and undefiled. This you cannot extinguish, for the flame is burning brightly in the lamp that the Son of God holds in his hand to illumine the way of every human being that desires to rise up from sin and come to the Almighty Father. A great company of priests and religious men and women are directing their gaze toward that light, and before the King shall come in his glory, many, many thousands of them will be enrolled in the army of the Lord.

As a result of your perusal of these letters, Cardinal, the notion might enter your head to get married to some good sensible woman. I beg you to believe that I shall be only too proud and happy to perform the ceremony without a reward,

except the consciousness of making two hearts happy. And we shall give you and your bride such a glorious reception in Masonic Temple as New York has never before witnessed. Stranger things have happened, as we know from history. The signs of the times are all favorable for a new departure in the moral government of your Church. You will render the name of McCloskey immortal if you have the courage to be a leader in these times.

Very respectfully yours,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER VII.

SIR:—Many volumes have been written on the subject of nuns and nunneries, yet much remains to be told. Like all priests, I have been thrown much in the society of nuns. Many of my relatives are nuns in Ireland. I knew them as a boy and I loved them as sweet angels of God. I was acquainted only with their exterior life, such as appeared when I visited them in the parlor of the convent. I believed then, as I was taught, that they were the “spouses of Christ,” as the Roman ritual and prayer books represent them.

But when I became a priest and had daily intercourse with the inmates of convents, I learned

to pity the sad fate of the young creatures who were compelled to lead such lives as I observed in them. It is a sad sight to look upon hundreds of women living together, thinking they are pleasing God by abstaining from marriage, as if marriage was a sin; and the Church of Rome—the voice of God, as they deem it—telling them that they are the spouses or wives of Christ, and that to be obedient to the Church is the surest passport to heaven.

In 1877 I was somewhat startled in my notions about nuns, and their supposed “happy” lives in convents, when I learned that sister Rose, the music teacher in St. Jarlath’s Church, had got married to a letter-carrier in Chicago. I thought over this a good deal, for I had known Sister Rose to be a most exemplary nun, and I puzzled my brain to know how or why she had got married. She was a little woman, young and not over pretty, but what you would call attractive.

One morning she gave her lesson as usual, and quietly slipped out to be married at the midday hour. I would give a good deal to know how she did her courting. In modern life young people generally know each other for some time before they enter into a marriage engagement, and when they take upon themselves the solemn obligations of matrimony their friends and acquaintances are called to witness the ceremony. But here was a poor nun running off in her con-

vent garb to marry the postman. Why did she not consult her family and friends on this interesting occasion? Because she had no family or friends after she had entered into convent life. All outside the walls of the convent were dead to her, except some kind Protestant friends who might pity her if she told them about her condition. She told the postman and he had pity on her. He must have been a good fellow. I will try to find out his address to congratulate him.

In Chicago, during my ministry there, several nuns left their convents and returned to the "world," as your Church calls all social life and duty that is not "religious." Some time ago a young lady called to see me; she told me that she had just left the convent attached to the Redemptorist Church in Third street, this city. She was an only child and her parents in Bay Ridge, Long Island, readily took her home. She told me why she left, but it would be improper for me to repeat her story. Another lady, who recently came to me, told me she had left the convent in Columbus, Ohio, and when she came to her mother's house in Brooklyn the door was slammed in her face, and she was sent a wanderer in the world without a friend or acquaintance. I placed her in the way of getting friends who would help her if she proved worthy.

From across the ocean comes the intelligence that a young nun was brought to the police sta-

tion in Gratz, Germany, wet through and in a state of unconsciousness. It appears that she had been forced to enter a convent, and that she had made an attempt to escape by jumping from the convent into a mill-stream which flows under the wall of the building. The superior of the convent appeared at the police station to claim the nun, but the authorities refused to surrender her. Much indignation was expressed by the populace.

From this it may seem as if nuns are forcibly detained in convents in Europe, but are at liberty to come out of them in the United States. It is true that fear of the law and public opinion compels your Church to open the convent doors to a nun when she desires to come out, but there is a power to keep her in more binding than bars and bolts. It is the discipline in which she has been trained. She knows that once she enters the gates of the convent she has placed on herself a mark that time can never efface with her own family and the Roman Catholic public.

If she leaves, where shall she go? She dare not live with her own people even if they were willing to receive her, which not one family in a hundred would do. How could she face the half averted looks of the neighbors and companions of her youth? How could she bear the sneering remarks of the coarser sort, that "she must have done something or she would not have left the

convent. Perhaps the "something" she had done was to protect her virtue from the lust of some wine-drinking priest of your church. It is not an unusual thing for a priest to visit the convent, which is always near them, after dinner, especially if he has partaken freely of the liquid refreshments that adorn every priest's table.

I have heard a great deal from other priests of what transpires on these occasions, but I shall speak only of what I know. Every nun takes a vow of "obedience," and generally keeps it where her favorite priest is concerned.

I would not have it understood for one moment that I consider all nuns immoral. By no means. But so many of them are evidently destined by nature for prolific mothers, that it is not to be wondered at if some of them indulge in illicit pleasures. They enter the convents while young, so young that they do not know their own minds, and when love comes to them they vainly regret that they cannot honorably satisfy the cravings of the heart in this respect.

If the nun departs from her convent, whatever may be the "something" that impels her to leave, where shall she go? She rarely knows anything by which she can earn her bread in the struggling world. She has no letters of recommendation by which she can gain the confidence of good people. The average Protestant thinks that most nuns lead immoral lives, and, of course,

they will not be received into respectable families. No door is open to them except the door of perdition, and yet not a week passes but some of them run this risk, for the hell they leave behind them is worse than anything could be outside.

Yours truly,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER VIII.

SIR:—When I was a Roman Catholic, I thought the Pope was not only the greatest man in all the world, but also the holiest. I do not think so now and with good reason.

Passing by the history of many bad Popes, as well as the life and adventures of the infamous scoundrel, Pope Alexander the Sixth, who in his day committed every crime from murder to picking pockets, let us take a recent instance in the career of the present “infallible” Pope, Leo XIII. He has been accounted a learned and shrewd man, altogether a different kind of person from the good-natured old Pope Pius IX., who preceded him.

Recently we learned that the great banking concern called the Union Generale had failed. The failure of a bank or even a commercial crisis

of great magnitude does not much affect religion. But this particular failure has far-reaching consequences, which, I am confident, will promote the growth of the Christian religion in a nation that has been called "the eldest daughter of the Church."

The history of this bank, called the "Union Generale," is as follows: A smart Frenchman, named Bontoux, who had been speculating on the Bourse during the presidency of Marshal McMahon, thought he could make capital out of the popularity the president had acquired with the Bourbon and the Clerical or Jesuitical party in France. When Marshal McMahon retired from the Presidency of the Republic, M. Bontoux, after consultation with some of the leading Roman Catholics of France, lay and clerical, went to Rome and laid before the General of the Jesuits, or "Black Pope," as he is called, a plan which he said, if adopted, would surely restore to the Roman Catholic Church her ancient glory, and to France her legitimate rulers. This plan was that the Church should get possession of all the money in France by establishing a bank that would be the most powerful in the world. France has 37,000,000 people, of whom 35,000,000 are Roman Catholics, or at least nominally so. That means 7,000,000 families. Now if each family of this number that puts money in banks could be induced to make one general bank the depository

of their savings, what a formidable power such an institution would become in a few years. M. Bontoux explained further that he had the endorsement of all the Catholic nobles, and men of wealth in France, and, of course, of all the Jesuits, bishops and priests.

“Go and see Pope Leo XIII., and ask his blessing on the enterprise,” said Father Berckx. “Give me a note of introduction,” said M. Bontoux. “I’ll go with you myself and introduce you,” responded the Jesuit. Admitted into the august presence of his holiness, they devoutly kissed his big toe and told him of the grand scheme that was to restore him to his temporal power and make him the supreme ruler of earth, as were the Popes of past times. Pope Leo XIII. has one idea in his head. Our poor Roman Catholic brethren imagine that he is all the time thinking how can he, as the vicar of Christ, help poor sinners to become good Christians, as our Saviour does. Not at all. The only idea in the present Pope’s head is how can he regain the temporal power and sovereignty that Pope Pius IX. lost through his stupidity. How the name of Leo XIII. would go down famous in history if he should regain what his blundering predecessor had lost!

He took the bait and formally gave his blessing to the new bank. He did not do this as you would, Mr. Cardinal, if you were called upon in

similar circumstances. Any common priest has as much "power" as you in bestowing a blessing on anything, from a big cathedral all the way down to a sick cow. But the blessing of the Pope carries tremendous weight, for it is in his capacity as "successor of St. Peter," "supreme pontiff," and "infallible head of the Church," that he gives it.

M. Bontoux, when he had secured the precious blessing in writing, immediately left Rome and returned to Paris. The first thing he did was to strike off several thousand medals in commemoration of the event. Next he spent 1,000,000 francs, or \$250,000, in advertising this wonderful blessing. Then he started his bank. The Jesuits threw all their vast wealth into it, and counselled their penitents in the confessional to do likewise. The Count de Chambord gave 5,000,000 francs, the Duke de Broglie 2,000,000 francs, and other noble Frenchmen in proportion. The whole body of Roman Catholics followed suit. They were told from the altar and in the confessional that the "blessing" of the Pope carried certain indulgences which could be gained by depositing their savings in the great Roman Catholic bank. M. Bontoux was in high feather. So much money poured into his bank, he did not know what to do with it. But he was a man of resources. Having got the blessing of the Pope—the vicar or agent of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth—what was

there he could not do? He established branches of his bank in all parts of France, in Austria, Hungary, Belgium, Bavaria, and was making arrangements to have a branch in the United States.

But the Jesuits were expelled from France soon after President Grevy came into office, and, on leaving, of course withdrew their money from M. Bontoux's bank. The blessing of the Pope, however, once given can never be recalled, and it remained with the ingenious banker. He began to "water" his stock, and give false reports like some bankers and railroad magnates that we know of in this country. But the Jesuits had gone back on him and he could not survive the shock.

His bank failed, and its doors were closed. Thirty-one strong boxes in the Union Generale's vaults were found empty, and an examination of its books prove that when M. Bontoux stated that its profits were 57,000,000 francs, there was really a deficit of 96,000,000 francs. And the end of all has come when M. Bontoux, president, and M. Feder, manager, were arrested, and legal proceedings begun against several of the directors.

Let me ask you, Cardinal, is the Government of France strong enough to indict, for conspiracy in this fraudulent transaction, Pope Leo XIII., as the principal beneficiary of this robbing scheme? I doubt it, for there was no power in the Government of the United States to punish

Archbishop Purcell, when he closed on five million dollars of the hard earnings of the poor Roman Catholics of Cincinnati four years ago. They never got a cent of their money; it was all gone. The millions of French families that have been robbed by this bank that the "infallible" Pope of Rome blessed so heartily will never again see a cent of their money. How much of it has found its way into the treasury of the Pope? The people imagine that he is "infallible" when he tells them that he knows more about Christianity and the truth of God than does the Bible. Yet you say, in the present case, he was not "infallible" when he gave his blessing to M. Bontoux's bank. But "infallibility" can never be deceived.

The day is dawning when the people who now blindly believe in that Pope will see that his claims for holiness and infallibility are based on false pretences, and that instead of being the greatest man in the world, he is the most unmitigated humbug.

Very truly yours,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER IX.

SIR:—The brethren whom I left behind me in your church feel great sympathy for the Pope, because he is no longer a temporal sovereign able to hold up his head with the best of crowned monarchs. Since his own Italian countrymen told him to step down from his throne he has sulked in the Vatican. He cries out to all the world that he is a prisoner, and that he is spending his time in solitude on account of the evil days that have come upon him. What kind of a prison he is in, and what this solitude means, we learn from the following facts about his household.

In Rome the Pope has declined compliance with the law requiring the filling up of a census paper. A bundle of papers was, however, forwarded to a certain prelate of the household, who made out the returns, from which it appears there are over five hundred persons living in the Vatican, nearly one-half of whom are females.

When I read this statement, I could scarcely believe my senses. Five hundred persons in one house, waiting on the Pope day and night, and half of them females!

Before I ask the question, what did he want with two hundred and fifty women, or what busi-

ness they had to do with an equal number of "celibate" cardinals, bishops and monsignori, permit me to remark that the popular belief of the American Roman Catholic of Irish importation, is that the Pope is a prisoner in the Vatican, that he is in chains, and that a penny to buy a loaf of bread, ("Peter's Pence") would be very acceptable to him. Father Gavazzi told me last year that when the Pope first shut himself up in the Vatican, the priests in the rural parishes in Italy and France, represented to the people that his dungeon was so vile he was compelled to sleep on a straw bed and eat the scantiest fare. The consequence was that the poor people made up packages of bed-clothing, and boxes of provisions to be sent to him.

There are eleven thousand rooms in the palace of the Vatican. Its library, picture galleries, mosaics, and museums of art are the finest in the world. All the bonds of the United States government could not purchase them if they were offered for sale. During the last six months the Pope has made believe that he must leave Rome, as his position there is becoming intolerable, but he did not know where to go. France has expelled the Jesuits, and does not want them back. Bismark has no asylum in Germany to offer him. England would give him the island of Malta, and he would be glad to accept it but for the fact that his faithful Irish subjects are at war with the

“hated Saxon,” and they would turn against him to a man. But if he could find a place outside of Rome to make a new home for himself in these declining days of the Papacy, how could he transport his Vatican treasures thither? And above all, how or where could he find a mansion large enough to lodge the two hundred and fifty female members of his household, not to speak of the two hundred and fifty males?

America, “the land of the free,” is the only country where the Pope could live in independence of “European despots,” and to this great nation I doubt not you have invited him. But where would you advise him to locate with his household?

The Mormon question is in the front rank for discussion; why does not some one suggest to the Pope to go to Salt Lake City with his retinue of five hundred followers, male and female. There is not another city in America that would tolerate the dwelling together of five hundred men and women without marriage. But Utah is pre-eminently “the land of the free” in this respect, and there alone would the Pope be allowed to have two hundred and fifty females under the same roof with himself, and his cardinals and bishops.

Notwithstanding the advantages that Utah holds out to him, I doubt, however, that he will come to America with all his retinue. The liberty enjoyed by all classes in this country would

not agree with him and his peculiar institutions. And so many priests are now loudly protesting against the infamies of his Church that I think his household of five hundred could not long hold together without getting married, as all priests now are doing.

From Hartford information has been received that the Rev. Father Edward Agudi, assistant priest at St. Joseph's Church, in Winsted, Conn., has finally dissolved himself from the church by the unusual course of getting married. Father Agudi left Winsted ostensibly to attend a convention of priests in Boston, and was believed by Father Leo, pastor of St. Joseph's, to have remained in that city. The fact has now been ascertained that Father Agudi went forth from Winsted to New Haven, and was there married to Bridget D. Welsh, a daughter of Patrick Welsh, of that city. The girl had formerly been employed in Winsted, and had attended St. Joseph's Church. The marriage ceremony is reported to have been performed by a Methodist clergyman, for the reason that the bridegroom would have been recognized by any one of the Roman Catholic clergymen to whom he might have applied. The couple have located in Bridgeport, where the husband has opened a restaurant or dining saloon as a means of winning bread for the future. The intimacy between the couple was conducted so discreetly while in

Winsted, and the correspondence so carefully concealed after the young woman's return to New Haven, that Father Agudi's parishioners had no intimation of the affair. I had the pleasure of meeting Father Agudi in Bridgeport last summer. All classes of people speak well of him (they call him Mr. Gody in that city), and even the Roman Catholics patronize his restaurant, and think it an honor to be served by a priest's wife. He promised to come to New York and work with me for the conversion of our Roman Catholic brethren. He is very happy in his marriage; and though he is an Italian and his wife Irish, they are now

"Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one."

And we have the Rev. Father Leeming, of Boston, throwing aside his priestly robes to go on the stage. In his case it is merely a change from one theatrical performance to another. Any person seeing you and your priests performing mass would say you were consummate actors, so that the transition from Romish altar to the stage is not so very great after all. From England we learn that the Rev. Dr. Case, an Oxford man, who joined the Roman Church some years ago, and was appointed to the charge of the mission of Gloucester by the Bishop of Clifton, has returned to the Anglican Church. * * * The Rev.

Father Roberts, a nephew of Cardinal Manning, and a late member of the order of the Oblates of St. Charles Borromeo, Bayswater, has returned to the Anglican Church, and has married.

These are only a few of the many priests who, every week, are proving their honesty by leaving their eminent positions in the Roman Catholic Church, whether the cause be loss of faith in the doctrines of Rome or the gain of a lady's love. If all priests got married like those brethren they would be better men, and would not be so dreaded by every intelligent Roman Catholic mother who has handsome daughters.

The Pope will not come to America you may be sure. He and his cardinals and priests with their female companions should change their ways among us here, or they would be suspected of Mormonism. In fact some shrewd observers already see a marked similarity between Romanism and Mormonism.

Very truly yours,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER X.

SIR:—If in the providence of God all the Protestant ministers in the world were called by the Master in one day to give an account of their stewardships, the people of God—those who come to him by faith in Jesus Christ—would still be safe. The Bible would remain to instruct the mind, and the love of Christ for repentant sinners would continue forever. “He tasted death for every man.” “Wherefore, he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” “For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s; for this he did once, when he offered himself.”

But if the Almighty should sweep off the face of the earth the Pope, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and priests, what could the Roman Catholic people do for salvation? They would not know what to do. They may have Douay Bibles in their homes, but they have never been taught how to use them. They do not know how to approach the throne of grace except by using the

sacraments and ceremonies of your church as step-ladders. And the common saying, "No priest, no sacrament," is continually impressed upon their minds as an absolute truth. I have had much experience as a Roman Catholic priest in ministering to the souls of the people, and I deliberately say that I never met with one Roman Catholic, who believed that forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God could be had by any other means than the mediatorship of the priest. He stands between them and their creator. He offers up the sacrifice of the mass for them, they believing it is the same as the sacrifice of Calvary. He speaks to them, by authority he says, on the part of God, and in his name grants them pardon and absolution, no matter how heinous their transgressions may be. From the cradle to the grave he has blessings and indulgences for them, which only make them more hardened sinners, seeing how easily they can be forgiven. God pity them ! Many of them are in good faith, believing that the priest can save their souls. They know not that it has been written in the sacred volume, "There is but one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus ;" or if they know this they practically thrust Jesus aside and put the priest in his place.

After service a few Sundays ago, I noticed a crowd gathered at the head of the stairs leading to the street. I wished to go by quietly, but

some one plucked me by the coat and said, "here he is." Drawn into the group I was compelled to listen to the controversy that was going on. The central figure was a stalwart Irishman who was volubly discussing some points in the sermon I had preached that evening. He summed up his arguments against salvation by Christ alone by the statement that he as a Roman Catholic "did not know Christ, and did not see him; but he knew the priest and could see him any time, and talk to him about his soul." As Sydney Smith said that it would require a surgical operation to get a joke into some men's heads, so I thought my brother Irishman would have to undergo a similar process before he could receive the knowledge that his soul could be saved if there were never a Roman Catholic priest in the world.

Soon after I began to preach a Christianity different from and "independent" of your system of religion, a gentleman called on me and said he was attracted to the Roman Catholic religion by many things that he deemed commendable in it. He was an American protestant, and the example of Dr. O. A. Brownson, Father Hecker and other perverts to Rome had much influence in determining his course. He wished to become a Roman Catholic; but before finally deciding he resolved to go to Rome and there, at the fountain-head, see what this religion was. He broke up his home in this city and took his family with him

for a long residence in Rome. When the heart of Martin Luther was pained by the scandals and impieties of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany, he also went to Rome to strengthen his faith by imbibing of the waters of life as they flowed from the lips of the Pope. My American friend was as eager as Luther to drink of these waters if they proved wholesome. Speaking of the effect the Roman system of religion produces even on persons of the greatest intelligence, he related the following anecdote: he had a very dear friend, a Neapolitan nobleman, who was a strict Roman Catholic. This nobleman was taken sick, and when the American went to see him it was apparent the disease was deadly. Being advised to prepare for his last end, he said, "I have made all the requisite preparations. I have called in my physician and paid him a handsome fee to use all his skill in my case—that is his business. I have consulted my lawyer, and paid him liberally to arrange my affairs—that is his business. And finally I paid my priest all the money he wanted to attend to the salvation of my soul and grant me absolution from all my sins—that is his business. What more could I do?" I need scarcely add that my American friend did not become a Roman Catholic.

The same reliance on the priest is the most marked characteristic in the spiritual life of every Roman Catholic throughout the world. "No

priest, no sacrament," is literally true of that religion, and by the same logic of facts, "no sacrament, no salvation," is equally true. In the Roman Catholic Church the newborn child is in a state of original sin that can be washed out of the soul only by the priest baptizing it. Though it be only ten minutes old, it becomes a Christian as soon as the priest puts salt in its mouth, annoints it with oil, and sprinkles it with water. But, as years go on, more sins come to take the place of the original one, and the priest is again in request to have them wiped out by giving absolution after confession is made to him. This has to be repeated all one's life. A new sin every day or every week, or the old ones come back in a new dress, must be forgiven, and the priest is ever ready to perform the ceremony. The Church will curse any one who is not married by the priest. The priest is called into the chamber of the sick to prepare the soul for eternity, even before the physician is summoned in many cases.

When the Roman Catholic dies the priest is more necessary than ever, for he has the power of drawing the soul out of purgatory, and causing all the gates of heaven to fly open, provided the friends of the deceased have money enough to pay for the job by getting masses said. It is a safe estimate to say that three-fourths of the Roman Catholic priests in America do not believe in these things any more than they

believe they have the power to put horns on a refractory parishioner, or to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. But it is their profession to minister these things to the people who have been brought up in ignorance and superstition. A lawyer will take a fee from a client, though he knows the case will go against him. A physician will take his fee from a patient, though he knows that the pill or potion given is perfectly harmless; so the priest will take money for masses for the living and the dead, and grant absolutions and indulgences, though he laughs in his sleeve at the credulity of the people who believe that his power to do these things is from God.

Take away the priest and the whole fabric of your church crumbles into pieces. Then the people who desire to serve God will learn that Christ is the great high priest who, "After he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. . . . For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." The influence that a good man who occupies the position of a Roman Catholic priest may have among his people, I would not seek to destroy. But that he is deceiving them in the matter of their eternal salvation is plain to every one who will read the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, from which I have quoted above. There are very few priests who are themselves deceived regard-

ing this subject. The performance of the mass as a sacrifice for the living and the dead, the granting of absolution from sin, and the various benedictions they bestow so liberally, they regard in the light of mere professional duties. That is their business. But I am glad to say many of them are becoming ashamed of such professional work and are quitting the business. May Almighty God give them grace and strength to be true to the principles of honesty that every upright man feels within himself, and may the people who look upon them as their mediators with God be brought to the knowledge of the only mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Yours very truly,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER XI.

SIR:—Time has corrected many mistakes of the past, and righted many wrongs, as is proved by the statue of Savonarola, the reformer, burned at the stake by Alexander VI., placed lately in the Hall of the Five Hundred at Florence. In the square before the Palace of the Signoria Savonarola suffered martyrdom. Arnolfo da Brescia, the religious and political reformer, who was burned at Rome, and whose ashes were thrown

into the Tiber, has received the honor of a statue in his native city.

At the unveiling of the statue there was great popular enthusiasm. The ministry was represented by Signors Zanardelli, Baccarini, Baccelli, and Magliani. Deputations were present from the Senate and many other public bodies.

Arnold of Brescia occupies a conspicuous place in history. He contended against the corruptions of your church in the early part of the twelfth century. He was the pupil of Abelard, whose romantic love for Heloise overshadows his strenuous opposition to Rome's doctrinal innovations. Arnold, in laying bare the corruptions of the Church of Rome, excited the wrath of the Pope and the doctors of theology. St. Bernard denounced him as a violent enemy of the church, yet the people gladly listened to him. His doctrines exerted a powerful influence in Rome. An insurrection against the Papal power followed. Arnold exhorted the people to establish a republican form of government. Pope Lucius II. opposed the demands of the populace for a reformation of the Church and State, and was killed during an insurrection in 1145. His successor, Pope Eugenius III., fled to France to escape a similar fate.

The next Pope was Adrian IV., the Englishman who, in 1156, by a bull, gave Henry II., King of England, authority over all Ireland and ordered

the inhabitants to obey him ; without a shadow of claim upon that island, for Ireland did not at that time acknowledge the Popes or bishops of Rome as their spiritual heads. The Church in Ireland had only one head, Jesus Christ. But this English Pope, who was said to be the illegitimate son of a priest, was resolved that he would rule with an iron hand. He refused to crown the Emperor Frederick I. unless Father Arnold, of Brescia, would be brought to punishment for raising his voice against the church, and the Emperor was the obedient slave of the Pope. Arnold was arrested tried, hanged, his body burned, and the ashes thrown into the Tiber by order of the Pope. Behold now how the Italian nation honors the achievements of those priests. Savonarola, like Arnold, sought to purify the church and deliver her from the horrible corruptions he saw in all ranks of the clergy from the Pope downwards. Other priests and reformers strove for the same result.

They met their death like heroes, and their native land, rejoicing in its new-found freedom, honors them. It has been said that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church. So the life and work and death of those priests have borne fruit in the religious and political freedom of their native land. They had no foreign foe to fight. They only sought to clean that which was

foul in your church, and they were killed for their endeavors to do so.

I presume you and all other Roman Catholic priests would be glad to forget your historical studies about that Pope Alexander VI. As you know he was the father of six children by two concubines, before he became Pope. His son, Cæsar Borgia, comes down to us in history as the type of cruelty, next to his father and the Emperor Nero. Lucretia Borgia, the Pope's daughter, was said to be living with her father as his wife. Alexander himself was poisoned by a cup of wine that he had prepared for one of his Cardinals.

All this immorality and crime in your church occurred only a few years before Martin Luther appeared on the scene of the world's history. If he had remained in your church trying to "reform" it he would have met the same fate as Savonarola and Arnold of Brescia. But the word of God told him he could not find salvation in your communion, and he came out of it. It is a grand testimony to Christian heroism to see those Italians whose fathers, years ago, burned at the stake those martyrs, erecting a monument to their memory, and glorifying the achievements of the reformers of past ages. Day by day Italy is becoming more free from Romish superstition, and when her people turn to the

Gospel there will be no use for a pope in that beautiful land.

Every American priest who has recently visited Rome finds that there is no faith among the priests. Everything that we were taught in our youth to regard as holy and sacred is laughed at by them.

They have no faith. Transubstantiation is a meaningless word to them, so is the "*Absolve te*" (I absolve thee) of confession. One of those Italian priests has been recently tried by an ecclesiastical court for changing the words in the administration of baptism. Instead of saying: "*Baptizo te in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti*," (I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost), as he poured the water on the head of the child, he used the words: "*Baptizo te in nomine diaboli*," (I baptize thee in the name of the devil.)

One of the rules of your Church is that a priest must not say mass unless he is fasting. No Roman Catholic would dare to take the communion after he had broken his fast. Yet the priests in Italy do not scruple to eat breakfast before they perform the ceremony. One of the most distinguished young priests of Rhode Island called to see me recently. He said he had lost all faith in the Catholic Church, after he had spent some years in Rome. He was secretary to one of your

brother Cardinals, and one of his duties was to bring a cup of coffee and an egg every morning to his Eminence before he said mass.

At this present writing considerable excitement exists in Milan, Italy, over the conduct of Father Albertario in going to a restaurant and taking a cup of coffee before celebrating mass. Albertario says he will continue to drink his coffee, and does not propose to submit to any dictation about it. Already the clergy and populace of Milan are said to be divided into "Coffeeites" and "Anti-Coffeeites." Father Albertario ought to be ashamed of himself; he ought to take his coffee in his own house.

Twenty years ago one who read the Bible in public in Rome would be consigned to the tender mercies of the Inquisition. At present there are twenty Protestant churches and schools in that city. In other large cities of Italy there are from three to five churches, and in almost every town the pure Gospel is preached. Every week we read of the conversion of priests not in Italy alone, but also in France, Germany, and even Spain.

Here in America scores of priests have recently left your church and are drawing the people after them by thousands and tens of thousands. Nuns are leaving their convents in large numbers, monks are quitting their monasteries, and many students for the priesthood in your seminaries

are abandoning them every year to enter the ministry of the Protestant churches. I have welcomed a goodly number of them and helped them to learn to walk in the way of the Lord, as the Word of God directs us. If they come to you in their condition of doubt and helplessness, all you could say to them (allowing that you are a gentlemanly and good-natured man) is that they should first of all make confession of all their sins to you or to some other priest, and after receiving absolution something might be done for them. But this is what they had been doing all their lives without any benefit to their souls. It is because your church had done nothing for their spiritual life that they have left it.

This I have learned from all who have come to me, and it is confirmed not only by my experience but by testimony from all parts of the world. Take the case of Count Campello. While Canon of St. Peter's Church in Rome, the most renowned building in the world, he was for years in communication with Rev. Dr. Leroy Vernon, the distinguished missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Italy, to learn the Bible side of Christianity against the Roman view of it, which he had thoroughly mastered. In our classical schools we learned the old Latin maxim, "*Magna est veritas et prevalebit*" (great is the truth and it shall prevail). It was my privilege to meet Rev. Dr. Vernon in my church last year,

when he was in this country visiting the scenes of his youth, and I was not at all surprised that his conference with Count Campello and other priests in Rome should result in their conversion. When true ministers of Christ, devoted and self-sacrificing followers of the Saviour and his disciples, come in contact with the followers of the Pope, it must be expected that spiritually-minded priests will embrace the pure Gospel presented to them.

We are living in times of great moment to all thinking men, Cardinal, and as I respect your quiet disposition, I take pleasure in laying before you some very plain facts regrading your tottering church.

Father McFall, who has recently left your church, tells me hundreds of priests during the coming years will pluck up courage enough to speak out boldly and join us, as he has done. When he first thought of coming to me after learning that I was terribly in earnest in my efforts to rescue the priests and the people from superstition, he was so frightened at his daring attempt that he passed and repassed my humble residence several times before he had courage to ring the bell. And after he had pulled it with a despairing effort he ran away as if the Old Harry was after him.

But next day he came back, and when I opened the door, he said, "Are you Father O'Connor?"

I said, "Yes." "Well, I have come to see you to know if you can do anything for my poor soul and body." I told him I could not, but I knew one who could help him if he was an honest, sincere man. "I am a priest," said he, "and I called to see you because you were also a priest." The door of my heart and the door of my room were immediately opened to him. More than a dozen priests and students have come to me in a similar manner during the last two years. They all now give thanks to God for the tranquility of soul they enjoy. They know they can commune with their Saviour Jesus Christ without asking permission of you or the Pope. The Bible is their guide, and the love of Christ their strength in all the trials that may come upon them for his sake. Praying the same blessing for you, I am, very truly yours,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER XII.

SIR:—Next to Almighty God, the Virgin Mary, in your church, is the most conspicuous and powerful of all heavenly beings. By a strange freak of superstition, she has been put in the place of Jesus as the mediator between God and man. Nearly every Roman Catholic wears the scapular

in her honor, and all devoutly pray to her whenever they are impelled to ask special favors from heaven.

Now, the Bible tells us that Jesus is the only mediator. All Protestants know this; but Roman Catholics do not know it, because they do not read the Bible. In every Roman Catholic church an altar is specially dedicated to her, and over it is usually a statue representing a beautiful woman. A gilded crown and a mantle of lace embellish the cold marble features that the people look upon with so much reverence. Intelligent Roman Catholics feel very sore when taunted with the worship of Mary. They deny it and say they only ask her to intercede with God for them. They imagine she has nothing else to do but to present to the Almighty the prayers they so glibly utter before her statue or picture. The language of eulogy fails to describe the titles your church has imposed upon the Virgin Mary. She is the "mother of God," the "queen of heaven," the "refuge of sinners," etc., etc.

But "Holy Mary, Mother of God," is her chief title. I have often wondered why it is that as your church gave Almighty God a mother you did not also give him a grandmother, cousins, uncles and aunts.

How Romanism is permeated by the superstitions and forms of paganism may be seen by comparing the teachings of Jesus in regard to prayer

with the teachings of your church on the same subject. One of Father Hecker's associates preaching recently in his church in this city said, as reported in all the Catholic papers: "Of all the devotions in use in the church, the rosary, or beads, is perhaps the most salutary and indispensable. Let such of you then, my brethren, as have neglected it, make up for your neglect without delay. Do not make the foolish excuse that you can read. Our Holy Father, the Pope, can read; but he says his beads. So do your bishops and priests. Follow, then, their example. Get a set of beads at once for yourself, and have them blessed for yourself, so that you may receive the indulgences attached to them, which you will not have by borrowing other people's. Then say them every day, if you have time, or at least as often as you can. You can do nothing in the way of prayer more acceptable to God, or more efficacious to obtain grace for yourself and others." What a rogue that priest is. He knows he is deceiving the poor Irish Catholics who believe such nonsense. God forgive him for not telling them to pray to Jesus. Saying the beads is a purely mechanical operation of running the little beads that make up the rosary through the fingers and repeating "one our Father and ten Hail Marys" until all the decades are completed. Among the happy memories of my seminary life at Baltimore is the recitation of "the beads" in the garden

just before the spiritual exercises that preceded supper. In winter, we said the beads in the prayer hall, but when the pleasant spring-time came, we adjourned to the garden, and, while walking up and down the broad avenue, repeated our beads mechanically, thinking very little about the prayers we mumbled to the Virgin Mary, but a great deal about the new life that we saw coming into existence in tree and shrub and cosy birds' nests. Still the Virgin Mary was the central point of our devotions during those walks, as she is at all times the pivot on which the prayers of Roman Catholics everywhere turn.

Who is the Virgin Mary—this central figure to which all Roman Catholics direct their devotional gaze? In the first chapter of the gospel according to St. Luke we have a history of the part that Mary took in the incarnation of the Son of God. She was the wife of a man named Joseph, a simple-minded, honest carpenter. While he was at work one day the angel Gabriel called at his house and said to his wife, "Hail, thou art highly favored, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women" (In the Roman Catholic prayer it is, "Hail, Mary, full of grace," etc.) She heard the salutation incredulously, and when she was assured it was no dream, but a real message from God, she gave utterance to that glorious "magnificat:" "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my

Saviour. He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." When she showed signs of child-bearing her husband, Joseph, became jealous. But he was appeased and the child was born in Bethlehem. Mary treasured in her heart all the things that happened, and took good care of the child. When he was twelve years old Joseph and Mary took him to the temple in Jerusalem according to the custom of the Jews, and when he tarried there after they had set out for home they returned to look for him, and found him in the temple teaching the doctors. From the gospel record we know that Jesus lived with Joseph and Mary in their humble home in Nazareth, "growing in wisdom and stature." Next we see Mary at the marriage in Cana, seeking to direct him, and receiving this remarkable answer: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" Again, when it was told to him, while preaching to the people, that his mother and his brethren desired to speak with him, he paid no attention to her, saying, "Who is my mother? . . . And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matt. xii., 48-50.) Mary appears again at the foot of the Cross, and for the last time her name is mention-

ed in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, wherein she is represented to us as being engaged in prayer with the other women and the disciples.

This is the history of the Virgin Mary, a woman beloved of God as many other women have been, faithful and true in the discharge of her duties, caring for her son as every mother does for her child, serving the Lord in her humble sphere, a model for all women. Yet what a heroine your church makes of her.

You tell the Roman Catholic people that she was taken up into heaven on a certain day, but you do not specify in what year. There is no other authority for the statement that she was carried aloft by angels than the word of a Pope, who, being "infallible," of course knows more about heaven and the way to get there than the inspired writers of the sacred scriptures. It is needless to add that the Bible tells us nothing about the assumption of Mary into heaven.

Yet you call upon the people to observe the day as a holiday of obligation the same as Sunday. They must go to mass, and refrain from work of all kind, except rum-selling. They must pray to Mary with unusual devotion to gain the indulgences that various Popes have attached to her feast. Novenas, or nine days special prayers, are previously offered to her, particularly by young maidens who seek her patronage. Some

of them ask her for good husbands, and others ask that they may be married soon to any kind of a husband. All, young and old, men and women, have some special favor to ask of Mary on this day. I doubt not but some of the saloon-keepers pray to her for an increase of business on the glorious feast of her assumption. It is a day of pic-nics with the various societies, sodalities and confraternities of every Roman Catholic church. The Redeemer is dragged in as a subordinate figure in the celebration. The tragedy of Calvary is supposed to be repeated in the mass in order that the glories of Mary may appear more conspicuous. Shame on your church, Cardinal, thus to make a mockery of sacred things. Mary had her place on earth as the mother of the humanity of Jesus, and his faithful follower. But the Lord Jesus is alone the being to whom Christians ought to pray, and when you cause sinners to turn aside from him and pray to some other person or thing, you are no better than an idolator.

Those who say they do not worship Mary, daily repeat the prayer called "Salve Regina." I translate it out of my Latin breviary, though it is to be found in all Catholic prayer-books, and there are special indulgences for every one who devoutly says it. When you read it, I presume you will get one of those indulgences. If there be any good in them it is a charitable act to pass

them around, and so I give all who care for such things an opportunity of gaining as much indulgence as they wish.

Our Saviour said, when men pray it should be to "Our Father," but your church says prayer must be also offered in this wise:

"Hail, Holy Queen! Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor, banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mournings and weepings in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile is ended, show unto us the precious fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary! Pray for us, O holy mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ."

That prayer needs no comment. If you can find your way to heaven by such means, I have no objection. But I ask the Roman Catholic people to judge for themselves whether it is better for them to pray to Mary or to Jesus.

Yours truly,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER XIII.

SIR:—The great majority of the members of your church have very little respect for the Bible. They consider it something dangerous to handle, as if it were a spiritual torpedo. I have heard old Father Damen, the Jesuit of Chicago, roar out denunciations against it until the walls of the great Jesuit Church in that city rang again and again. Since the Reformation millions of copies of it have been burned by the authorities of your church, and if you had your wish to-day I doubt not you would rejoice to see all the Bibles in the world destroyed in the flames. It is a book full of dangers to your church. The ignorant Irish and German priests in America (and there are many such) are affected by a sight of it in much the same manner that a red rag affects a mad bull. American priests are more liberal, and some of them believe it to be the revealed word of God.

Tradition has brought to our knowledge other information concerning God that is not found in the bible, and your church says we must believe this also. Passing that by for the present, let us open it at the first chapter of Isaiah and read the eighteenth verse: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as

scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

You believe that this great prophet was inspired by Almighty God, and that what he says so plainly is as clear to our understanding as if God had spoken the words directly to you or me. Then it is only a question of how this wonderful cleansing of the soul can be accomplished. The condition attached is, "if ye be willing and obedient." No one knows better than I do that the great mass of Roman Catholics are willing and anxious to have their sins forgiven. During the years I officiated as a priest of your church, I heard not less than 50,000 confessions of men, women and children, and every one of those came to me with a sincere desire to have their sins forgiven by me as the agent or instrument of God. They did not know whether I pronounced the words of absolution or not, because I spoke them in Latin ; they had to rely on my good will. Without egotism, I may say that I acted honestly and in good faith with all who came to me, and pronounced the words of absolution and gave the proper advice to each person in due form. But I have known priests who did not do this, because they had no faith in confession or absolution. One such priest told me in the presence of many persons that for seven years he never pronounced the words of consecration at the mass or the words of absolution over the penitent at con-

fession. So that of the thousands who knelt to him in all these years, not one received the forgiveness of their sins, even according to your method of forgiving them.

But assuming that you and all your priests are as zealous and conscientious as I tried to be, and I know many priests who are, it is important for all of us to know how the words of the Lord quoted above can be applied as medicine to our souls. How can our souls made scarlet by sin become white as snow—how can the crimson stain be washed out of them? Surely no greater boon could be conferred on man than this, that all the evil he has done in the course of his life by thought, word and deed should be blotted out and forgiven as if he had never sinned. How the soul of the Psalmist yearned for this great blessing! (Psalm li.) “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me

with thy free Spirit. . . . A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

You believe that this cry of David was heard by the merciful God whom he addressed. Every soul is precious in the sight of God, and if the most hard-working Irishman, or the most bloated rum-seller in New York, were to cry unto the Lord and repent as sincerely as David did, the same mercy would be extended to him.

While I admit that Roman Catholics are anxious to obtain forgiveness of their sins, my knowledge of the word of God and my experience as a priest have taught me that they do not take the right way to gain it. They know that God can forgive them, and the expression, "God forgive me," is frequently used by them when they do or say what they think is sinful. It is a reverent expression and is pregnant with meaning to the true Christian. But to the average Roman Catholic it implies no more than the hope that God will wink at the trifling fault or "venial sin" they ask pardon for in that way. Great big sins must be forgiven in another way. The "scarlet sins" and the "sins red as crimson" must be forgiven otherwise than by a direct appeal to God alone. When a Protestant realizes that he has violated the commandments of God, and is thereby a sinner, he throws himself on his heavenly Father's mercy and asks pardon through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, "whose

blood cleanseth from all sin." Our good God has in this way made provision for receiving into his favor the repentant sinner who comes to him by faith in Christ and by ceasing to do evil. There must be the consciousness of sin; the Decalogue tells him what sin is, and his own conscience must cry out against him. There must be repentance, true and sincere repentance, a sorrow of the soul for having offended God, and a hatred for the things that caused his indulgence in sin. How forcibly Mr. Moody expresses this when he says that repentance is turning around, "right about face," from sin to God. There must be an abiding faith in Christ the Redeemer, that "he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Temptations to sin will present themselves to one with such faith, but he believes with the Apostle Jude, who says, "God our Saviour is able to keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." This is the case of the Christian who is willing and obedient to serve the Lord and not be the slave of sin. "Being justified by faith, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

When a Roman Catholic is conscious of sin he feels dreadfully bad over it, so bad indeed that he cannot keep the knowledge to himself, but must tell some one about it. God pity

him! he does not know, unlike the Christian who reads his bible, that he can tell his heavenly Father about his state, and relying on the merits of Christ obtain his forgiveness. Though he has faith in God and in the redeeming power of the sacrifice on Calvary, he does not know that he can, like the Prodigal, rise up and go to his Father. Your church has never taught him that he can go directly to God with his sin-laden soul and be cleansed, and he does not know that the Bible will teach him this as the only sure way of getting forgiveness. He considers his way of life and perceives that he is a sinner, perhaps not so bad as others whom he knows, but still "a pretty bad sinner," to use his own expression. What is he to do? Your church has marked out a way for him. He has no Bible, or if he has one he never uses it. But he has several books of devotion or prayer-books. In the use of these books he is not unlike the sailor who had the ten commandments, neatly printed and framed, hung up on shipboard, and used to say with great complacency, when turning in to sleep, "Lord, them's my sentiments." It is well for the Roman Catholic that he has the devotion and prayers somewhere, even bound up in a book, if he has them not in his heart.

The idea of God instilled into his mind by the teachings of your church is, that he is so fierce and vindictive no one dare approach him in a

direct manner. In the prayer-books and in your preaching he is often compared to a mighty monarch who rules over a great kingdom. The common people cannot come near such a king ; they must have recourse to some one near the throne who has influence at court ; and even to reach this latter person intercession must be made with the humbler satellites. This is a fixed idea in the mind of the Roman Catholic concerning God. Accordingly the Virgin Mary, St. Patrick, St. Bridget, and the thousand and one "Saints" of your Church are invoked by him to intercede with the Almighty. Long and elaborate prayers to these "Saints" are prescribed for him to use before he goes to confession, and even when he begins his examination of conscience. This examination is long or short, according to the length of time the person has been away from confession. The way in which confession is made, and the process of examination, I give from my experience and from the authorized books of devotion that all Roman Catholics use. My Christian readers can verify what I say by borrowing a prayer-book from any of their Catholic acquaintances. You and my Roman Catholic brethren know well that what I say is literally true.

Yours truly,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER XIV.

SIR:—In my last letter I pointed out the Scriptural way of salvation by faith in Christ, and how by repentance and regeneration that faith becomes practical in the daily life of every Christian.

In this I will give the Roman Catholic way of salvation. It is of a complex nature, but I shall try to disentangle it for the edification of the people. The Roman Catholic who desires to be saved from sin proceeds in this wise: He examines his conscience on the ten commandments of God and the six commandments or precepts of the Church. These are presented to him in the catechism and prayer-books. He is told that he sins against the first commandment by going to a Protestant church or uniting in prayer with any person who is not a Roman Catholic; by doubting any doctrine that the Church of Rome teaches, even though the Bible should teach the contrary; by reading anything that may lead to such doubt. These are called sins against faith. He sins against hope by not having confidence in God's mercy, or by foolishly expecting salvation by any other means than such as your church holds out to him. He sins against charity by not loving God above all things, and his neighbor as

himself. Every priest knows how many of these sins his penitents commit. They read things that call into question the infallibility of your church; many of them occasionally go to Protestant churches; few of them love God with sincerity of heart, and all of them, with you at their head, hate me and my brethren who have left their church, and every Protestant who raises his voice against it, with a hatred that can be paralleled only in the breasts of demons.

The second commandment of the Decalogue is altogether omitted in the Roman Catholic manuals, thus mutilating the commandments of the Lord that were given to the people amid the thunderings and the lightnings of Mount Sinai, because it says, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." The images and statues of the Virgin Mary and the saints, with the crosses, medals, and pictures that adorn the walls, would quickly disappear if you dared to write this commandment over the doors of your churches. But rather than give up your idols, you set at nought the word of God. Remember, however, that he is a jealous God, who will punish those that bow down and worship or pray to anything but himself. The penalty of mutilating or distorting the

word of God is a terrible one: "If any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this Book." (Rev. 22, 19.) As the Roman Catholics learn to use the Bible and depend on it for the knowledge of God and the way of salvation, they will not incur this penalty, but leave your Church in greater numbers than they are doing now. Your church makes the third commandment the second in your list. The Roman Catholic sins against it by taking the name of God in vain, by blasphemy, cursing and swearing. What a memory he must have to recollect the hundreds of curses and blasphemies he utters between confessions! There is not a rum-shop kept by the members of your church that does not reek with foulness of language of this nature. The next commandment, to keep holy the Sabbath day, is observed by them if they go to mass. That is all that is required. In all large cities the custom with many is to turn into the grog-shop immediately after leaving the church. Pic-nics, excursions, and processions are the commonest features of the observance of the day by them. The principal sin against the next commandment is not to obey the Pope and the priest. Parents may be slighted, children neglected, the officers and laws of the State condemned — these are

trifling faults compared with the sin of disobeying the priest. Quarrelling, fighting, anger, hatred and getting drunk, are sins against the command not to kill. All the whiskey-shops in Ireland and ninety-nine per cent. of those in this country are owned by Catholics, and their patrons are mostly of the same faith. Here are sins and causes of sins without number that must trouble the soul of him who makes a conscientious examination of conscience.

The thoughts, words and actions against chastity that your church requires her followers to confess I must not touch upon. The souls of many priests and penitents, especially young females, are ruined daily by the filthy language that passes between them. The young priest feels the flush of shame mounting to his cheeks as he hears some young female pouring into his ear things that should not be mentioned, and that she would never have thought of if they had not been suggested to her by the foul imaginations of the writers of your books. And the case is worse, if possible, in the confession of married persons. No one dares to translate into English the language used by your church in the textbooks on this subject.

It is a sin to steal. But in the case of Catholic servant-girls who live in Protestant families, if they get plenty of masses said, and are generous

to the priests and to all church purposes, that commandment can be easily satisfied.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor” would be a great stumbling block in the way of your church and people if there were not another commandment, of the Jesuits’ making, to take its place—“The end justifies the means.” Last spring one of your priests, Father Fitzimmons, of Dansville, N. Y., wrote a letter to the local paper in which he said that I never was a priest, that I was a very wicked man, bad enough even to throttle his holiness the Pope, etc. I replied telling priest Fitzimmons that I had been a priest, that I was not so very wicked as to choke the Pope, even if I had a chance to do so, and calling on him to make reparation for bearing false witness against the neighbor. He has not done so; and no Roman Catholic ever will retract a lie about an enemy. In the Catholic catechism most generally used in France, and approved by the bishops and priests, the following questions and answers have a conspicuous place:

“Q.—Who was Luther? A.—Luther was an Augustine monk in Germany, who apostatized, married a nun, and set himself to declaim against the Catholic Church. After leading a scandalous life, he died on rising from a meal where he had, as usual, gorged himself with wine and food.

“Q.—Who was Calvin? A.—Calvin was a

priest of Noyon. He adopted Luther's errors, added his own, went and settled at Geneva, where he burnt Michael Servetus, who had ventured to contradict him, and he himself died of a shameful disease."

Such shameless and shameful falsifications of truth and history, it has been well said, would be impossible except in schools under Romanist and Jesuit control.

To make up for the omission of the second commandment, the Roman Church divides the tenth into two. The ninth commandment of that church says, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife," and the tenth, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods." Now the last commandment given by Almighty God to Moses reads, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's."

Having examined his conscience regarding the sins he committed against these commandments, mutilated and distorted even as they are by your church, the Roman Catholic next proceeds to arraign himself on the commandments and precepts of the Church. They are six, and are of equal force with the Decalogue, if not greater. The first is to hear mass on Sundays and all holidays of "obligation." The Lord says, "Keep the Sabbath day holy," and you add that the

obligation is best fulfilled by observing the priest saying mass, nothing more. It is a fact that nine-tenths of the Roman Catholics in this and other large cities never hear a sermon during the year. There are five or six masses in each of your churches every Sunday morning, but the only one at which there is any preaching is the last or grand high mass. The workingmen and their families and all the young people go to the early masses, at which there is not a word spoken by the priest except the Latin words of the liturgy. No wonder that religion has no influence on their lives.

The second precept of the church is "To fast and abstain on the days commanded." Rarely will an Irishman break this commandment. He may swear and blaspheme, and get drunk and cheat without stint; but he will not dare to eat meat on Friday.

The third precept is "to confess your sins at least once a year." The fourth is "to receive the blessed Eucharist at Easter." The fifth, "to contribute to the support of the pastors; and a very potent influence is this commandment, in the hands of every priest. Woe to the luckless wight who does not pay the priest his regular dues for marriages, baptisms, masses, etc. He may obtain mercy from God for having offended him, but can expect no mercy from his reverence.

The sixth precept is "Not to solemnize marriage

at the forbidden times, nor within the forbidden degrees of kindred." But if one can pay for a "dispensation" he can marry when he pleases, and I verily believe if a man be very wealthy and make a rich offering to the Pope he can obtain a dispensation to marry his grandmother. In March last a naval officer called on me to be married. He and the lady were Catholics. He had been to see you, and your secretary, Father Farley, said he could not be married then as it was Lent. The gentleman said he had to go to sea in a few days, and as he could not wait he desired to know if there was no provision made for such a case in the rules of the Church. The answer was that if he would pay \$50 for a dispensation he could be married. He considered this extortion, and told Father Farley so. This is only one of many similar cases that have come to me.

Very truly yours,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER XV.

SIR:—Our Roman Catholic friend, having examined his conscience on the commandments and precepts and on the seven deadly sins, is prepared to go to the priest and confess them all. You may be sure he is sorry for them and sorry for

himself at the prospect of the ordeal he has to undergo. The fear of the priest is much more vividly before his mind than the fear of God. He thinks the Almighty is far away, but the priest is right there in that dark confessional box and the heart quakes at what the man with such terrible power may say or do. He may scold loud enough to be heard by the other waiting penitents; he may impose a hard penance, or he may refuse absolution altogether. It is told of a frontiersman who was about to get married that he went to confession to a priest, and as he withdrew he saw the lady entering the box at the other side. Not knowing what the rules of the confessional were, he turned back to the priest and said, "See here, old chap, don't tell that girl what I told you, or the coroner will have a job round this way." All Catholics have not the courage to say this to their priests. They approach him with fear and trembling. Great is the power of God, but greater is the power of the priest in the confessional.

One day, in Chicago, during my priestly life in that city, I noticed a party of strangers looking at the pictures and other articles of furniture in the church. I offered my services as guide to show them whatever was of interest in the building. After examining the vestments, missals and other things, one lady asked for what purpose were the black-looking sentry boxes arranged

along the sides of the church? I replied that they were the confessionals.

"Oh," said she, "is that where confession is made?" I answered in the affirmative.

"Could you please tell me," she inquired, "how it is done?"

I said the best way to get the information she sought would be for her to enter the confessional at the penitent's side, and kneel down there, while I would sit in the priest's place.

This we did, while her friends stood around deeply interested.

The confessional in all churches is so arranged that there is a grating with a slide between the priest and penitent. It was very dark in there as I sat down. The slide covered the grating. I drew it aside very gently, and as I did so, I could hear the quick and nervous breathing of the lady at the other side. For a few minutes there was the stillness almost of death. Then I suddenly whispered in the lady's ear—"Now tell me all your sins."

"No, no, no," she screamed, as she ran out, "not for all the world."

Her friends were alarmed, as they received her with blanched face and trembling all over. I assured them no harm had been done; but she said she was never more frightened in her life. "During the few minutes I remained in that dismal box," said she, "all I had ever heard about

the darkness of sin, and the horrors of the lower regions came vividly to my mind; I think I would have died if I was detained there another minute."

She could not be induced to join in the laughter that followed. "It is no joke for a lady to kneel down to a man in a place like that and be asked to tell everything that one thinks a sin," she said. I explained that a priest is in the confessional as a representative of God, and telling her sins to him was the same as if she told them to God. "That may be your view of it," said she, "but I did not look at it in that way. I saw you going into the box and I knew you were a man. Perhaps if you were an old man I would not so much care, but to tell my sins to a young man is what I never will do."

This lady was not a Roman Catholic, or she would know that the duty of hearing confessions falls chiefly on young priests. One reason is that the hearing of confessions is the most arduous and disagreeable duty a priest has to perform. Old priests avoid it as much as possible. Another reason is that Roman Catholic women, especially the young ones, like best to go to young priests.

I have heard thousands upon thousands of confessions during the years of my priesthood, and I tell you, Cardinal, I want to hear no more of them. They are all now in the tomb of memory, and I do not care to recall them. Would to

God that the people who knelt to me, with full faith in my power of absolving them, had confessed to their heavenly Father and repented: they would be sure of his forgiveness, and would be happy in the assurance that the blood of Christ had washed away all their sins.

I have spoken of the laborious duty imposed on a priest in hearing confessions. For many years I had to sit in the confessional daily for hours, and sometimes on Saturdays for as many as twelve hours, hearing the sorrowful tales of passion and crime that agitate the human heart. It was weary work for body and mind, and many times have I wished to be delivered from it. Yet I can give thanks to my heavenly Father that I fulfilled my duty, such as I conceived it to be, as faithfully as I knew how. No one ever knelt to me in confession that I did not try to make better with such counsel and direction as I thought best suited to each case.

This I learned to do from my own confessor in the seminary in Baltimore. Though he and I are now separated by a great gulf, my heart goes out to him in love and thankfulness for his efforts to make me a good Christian and a good priest. I tried to be both. You will say I failed in the latter. I don't know about that; but certainly I failed in making myself a Christian. It was only after many years, and not until I left your church, that I gave up the attempt.

It takes time for one who has been reared a Roman Catholic and educated as a priest to learn the way of salvation. How to become a Christian may seem plain to those who have the word of God in their hands from their youth, and who know they have free access to their God through his Son, who "has reconciled the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

I did not give up my efforts to make myself a Christian until I learned that my Redeemer alone could do that for me, and had done it by dying for me. I had but to believe this. That may seem easy to do, but it was not so to me; the whole course of my life had to be changed. There was to be for me no more sinning and repenting alternately. My Saviour held out to me the promise of salvation if I would accept it by faith in him. I know he will not break his promise to forgive me my sins, to abide in me, and to keep me in his love, and by his grace preserve me while I trust in his mercy and faithfully serve him.

But while I am giving this testimony our Roman Catholic friend is beginning his confession to the priest.

Having knelt down in the dark box, he says: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned." And then he goes on to say the "Confiteor:" "I confess to Almighty God, to the blessed Mary ever

Virgin, to blessed Michael, the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, Peter and Paul, and all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word and deed through my fault, through my grievous, great fault." Here he hits his breast three blows with his clenched hand, the harder the better, and pauses for the priest to ask him, "When were you at confession last?" The answer is given, and the priest says, "Now, what have you done since then?" The old Irish Catholic women will usually answer this question by giving a little groan and saying, "Musha, I did many things, your reverence."

"What are they?" he asks a little impatiently.

"Well, I can't remember them all, for I know I'm a great sinner, but I'll tell as many as I can recollect, and, dear knows, that's a list long enough. Sure, your reverence, my old man is the principal cause of all my sins, but for him I'd be all right. Sometimes you know he takes a drop too much, and then he is as bad as old Nick himself."

"But see here," the priest breaks in, "I am not hearing your husband's confession, but yours; tell me your own sins, and don't mind those of your husband."

"Yes, your reverence, but sure he's the cause of all my sins, and if you could get him to stop his ways I would——"

Again the priest must interrupt her, and endeavor to keep her to the recital of her own

transgressions. Unless he is experienced in the management of old ladies he has to submit to the infliction until the sins of half the people in the parish are poured into his ear. While willing to tell all they remember, some penitents use a good deal of ingenuity in their efforts to soften the wrong-doing or to escape its penalty. Some instances of this kind come to my mind now, but I shall reserve them for your perusal until my next letter. In all the doctrines of the Roman Church, there is none of so great importance as that of confession. It is the arch on which the whole structure of Romanism is built. Take away auricular confession and the priests' occupation is gone. If they continue in the ministry they will be like all other ministers,—preachers of the word of God and exemplars of the teachings of the gospel of Christ.

A young Irish-American, in Fort Madison, Iowa, thinks that taking souls out of purgatory is the principal occupation of priests; at least he says it was so in Hartford, Conn., when he was a Roman Catholic there a few years ago.

In proof of this he sent me a poem he composed on the subject. I regret that on account of the length of this letter I cannot give you more than a few stanzas of it. In his letter to me he says he recited the poem on thanksgiving day some years ago and was mobbed by the crowd of Irish Catholics that gathered around him. "But for

the timely interference of some Americans and Englishmen present," he says, "it is probable I would have been killed and thus unable to write any more poetry."

When the Lord had built His high abode,
He called it Heaven—the dwelling place of God.
When the rebel angels fought and fell,
He doomed them to a second place called hell.

These are recorded in Sacred Story,
But not one word of Purgatory—
A place that to the priest is known,
And to none else ;—'tis all his own ;

For Peter gave to him the key,
That he may get the jailor's fee
And send the soul to hell or Heaven,
Just as the gold is kept or given.

You may also wish to encompass his death
when you read it, Cardinal,

Yours truly,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER, XVI.

SIR : The methods pursued by penitents in confessing their sins differ according to the nature of the offences and the age of the persons. Those of mature years bluntly tell out whatever they have done that they consider sinful, and if the faults or crimes are old acquaintances that have been repeatedly confessed and repented of, but still maintain their ground, some extenuating circumstance is sure to be thrown in.

There must be no false delicacy even in the case of young girls who are ignorant in many things that are referred to in the examination of conscience. In the case of young females it has been said that ignorance of those things is a great part of innocence. Every priest knows that the practice of confession is injurious to the purity of mind of the confessor and his fair penitent. Those who think that there are safeguards in the confessional that would prevent any thought of love between them have no experience of the dangers of such intimate intercourse. What a young girl would shrink from telling even to a companion of her own sex she must not hesitate to disclose to the priest with all the attendant circumstances. When priests meet for social en-

joyment the conversation often turns on the queer things that girls say in confession. If a young lady thinks a priest good looking and would like to marry him, if it were possible, she must tell him so, and if she be richly endowed by nature and fortune his feelings at hearing such an avowal can be imagined.

It is one of the secrets of the priesthood that when a mutual affection is developed between a priest and one of his fair penitents she must be induced by every means at the command of the church to believe that she has a vocation for a religious life, and enter a convent. Love is effectually smothered in this way, though the vision of forbidden fruit rises up too frequently before the mind to disturb the quiet of heart that is sought for in this manner. The secrets of the confessional are subjects of conversation among priests in their idle moments more frequently than the outside world could imagine, and such topics are far from edifying, for it is usually the vicious tendencies of human nature that are referred to. If the priest thinks that a full confession is not made, he must put such questions as will bring out the whole story of one's life—every thought, word and deed. The intelligent Roman Catholics know how demoralizing the confessional is, and there are many men, who, under any circumstances, will not allow their wives to confess to priests.

The questions a conscientious priest must put to those who kneel to him are of such a nature that the spirit of evil is aroused in both confessor and penitent. The priest fares worse, if possible, than the confessing sinner.

The Athenians of old used to make their slaves drunk to inculcate lessons of temperance on their children, that the ridiculousness and foulness of intoxication might be impressed on their minds, from their earliest years. During my theological course in the seminary of St. Mary, Baltimore, the students were compelled to read up all the details of crime and immorality in our text-books, in order, as we were told by our professors, that we should be able to apply the fitting spiritual remedy to cases of that kind that would come before us in the confessional. Any one who has read the "Moral Theology" that is put into the hands of students as their text-book, can easily see what ideas they receive from such teaching. But we were told that it was our bounden duty to apply such teaching to the cases that came before us in the confessional. Some persons think that the Roman Catholic seminaries, where students are prepared for the priesthood, are hot-beds of vice. I have not found them so; and I do not hesitate to say that the Roman Catholic students who are preparing for the priesthood in the various seminaries of America compare favorably with other young men. Some western priest will

rise up and say I forget the cases in St. Francis' Seminary, Milwaukee, Wis., in 1869 when I was there studying German theology. I do not by any means forget how four German students, out of two hundred, were solemnly arraigned by the venerable Dr. Salzman, the President, for very serious crimes against morality. Two of them were the sacristans, or custodians of the altar vestments, etc., and as such had the keys of the chapel by which they could let themselves out into the world at any time. They availed themselves of this opportunity by going courting every night during the pleasant spring-time. The girls, who were a necessary part of the courting business, were the daughters of farmers in the vicinity.

The dear old doctor was very indignant at the results of these young men's "wildness." The proofs were so overwhelming that no denial could avail. In fact two babies presented for baptism at the seminary chapel by the girls, who laid the paternity at the door of the gay young students, were very convincing arguments. Other priests can relate similar escapades, to put it mildly, among students in their seminary experience. Of course such things are scandalous, but it is only natural that some of those students should become corrupt from the teaching they learn in their moral theology books.

When the young priest is launched into the

world, fortified with his bundle of questions to be put to all kinds of people, he thinks that he is doing the work of Christ in saving souls. And the people bring their souls to him to be saved. Some time ago a Roman Catholic lady, distinguished as a lecturer, asked why it is that the secrets of the confessional are never revealed by priests even after they leave your church. In answering her I used the privilege of an Irishman by replying to her with questions as to what were the "secrets" referred to, and where was the necessity of revealing what all intelligent people knew. The sins of the unregenerate, Cardinal, are not hidden from the thinking man who watches the emotions of his own heart. And sooth to say they are not wiped away by merely confessing them to a priest. If the penitent derives no benefit from the confession, assuredly the priest does not. In unloading himself of the questions on moral acts, or rather, I should say immoral acts, the priest himself does not come off unscathed. We constantly see instances of this among priests. Few can touch pitch and not be defiled.

Very truly yours,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER XVII.

SIR:—It is a characteristic feature of all controversy in the Roman Catholic church that it has no other weapons but those of abuse and vituperation for those who enter the lists against it, especially if they have had the good luck of leaving it.

When a Protestant minister becomes a Roman Catholic (and thank God this is of rare occurrence at the present day), he is a very good man in your estimation, and is loaded with honors by your church. Protestants in general have very little to say about him; they concede his right to choose that which his own intelligence, be it great or small, tells him is the best way for him. He is a free man and has a perfect right to go to Rome and become a Papist, or to Turkey and become a Mussulman, if his mind and heart lead him in that direction. But when a Roman Catholic priest renounces his allegiance to your church what a hue and cry is raised! He may have been an angel of light while a priest, but the moment he casts off his vestments all the hounds of calumny in your church begin barking at him, and the cry is set up, "Beware of him! he is a bad man, a bankrupt in character and reputation; possessed of the devil; not to be

trusted ; unworthy of belief," etc. Thus your church speaks of him, and its influence is so great in this world that many nominal Protestants believe this a necessary warning.

If there were any Protestants of this kind in the days of Martin Luther I daresay the cultured and refined among them would keep their skirts clear of him and tell their acquaintances to beware of him, because the Pope said he was a bad man. But he was good enough to be a zealous minister of the sacraments in your church until he raised his voice in protest against its superstitions.

The priests who flocked around the standard of religious freedom that Luther raised, obeying the voice of the Lord calling them to "Come out of Babylon," were denounced in the same manner that he was, and every Roman Catholic priest who has followed their example has come under the same condemnation. All through the centuries the vials of the wrath of your church have been poured out on them, and the vessel is always filled for him who comes out last. I have come in for my share. I do not complain, for I expected it. Neither am I going to defend myself. It is your business to villify me, because I sought the salvation of my soul outside the lines that you have drawn around your church. The solitary ray of light that came to me while I was a priest, though very dim and obscure, showed

me that I was in a false position, and I followed it until the full illumination of the Gospel of salvation by Christ alone shone upon my soul. When I realized this I considered it a sacred duty to make known the great truth to my brethren of the Roman Catholic church whom I had unconsciously led astray by false doctrine in the past. And I resolved, God helping me, to take my stand under the banner of Christ and fight the good fight of deliverance from superstition while life should last. If I had not done this I would not be so bitterly denounced by your church. If I had merely withdrawn from Rome and not raised my voice in protest against her false system of religion I could escape persecution and even retain the esteem of my friends. Every year many priests leave the church of Rome and go into secular business who are only too anxious to try to forget and make the world forget that they ever had been priests. I know many such men. There are more than one hundred ministers of the Gospel in America preaching in the churches of the various Protestant denominations who had been Roman Catholic priests, though many members of the churches are ignorant of this interesting episode in the lives of their pastors. Those ministers do not think it their duty to draw illustrations from their past lives or to say in their preaching, "When I was a Roman Catholic

priest.' Thus their experience in the Roman church and their influence among their former co-religionists are thrown away.

I have chosen another and what I think a better part. I have not retired from the ministry to go into secular business, nor have I become a minister of any Protestant denomination. I never open my mouth to preach but I announce that I had been a Catholic priest. Many of my acquaintances think this is not wise on my part. I do not think so, though poverty is my portion, as it is that of the brethren who are associated with me in the Independent Catholic Church.

All who have ever known us, know us no more. To our parents, our kindred, our parishioners, the companions of our youth, and the friends of our mature manhood, we are strangers. We are dead to them all.

For fifteen years I have not seen my beloved parents or the happy home of my youth. It seems a long time ago, for I had kind and indulgent parents. Now my name is banished from their lips, and their loving greeting comes to me no more. Yet I know the mother's heart yearns for her son ; and if God spare her and me, I shall yet return to her, and say to her what I preach every Sunday, "I am not dead, though I am no longer a Roman Catholic priest. I live in Christ Jesus, and he lives in me. The faith in the religion of Rome that you, my Irish mother,

taught me has departed from me never to return, and the Son of God, our loving Jesus, has come to me with his blessed religion instead. That religion of Jesus we find in his word, and in the Holy Spirit whom he sends to enlighten, comfort and strengthen every one who comes to him. The Pope has erected a barrier between you and your son, because of my renunciation of the superstitions of Rome, but Jesus Christ will break it down, my mother; and if you will come with me to kneel to him in supplication, forgiveness, reconciliation and joy shall be with us as we embrace, united in his love."

My mother's heart will turn to me when she learns that I am a happier and better man than I could be as a Roman Catholic priest, and that it is the grace of God and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ that has done this for me. She taught me in my youth the way of salvation by faith in the doctrines of Rome. I had no one to teach me otherwise in my college days and the early years of my priesthood. Now since God has blessed me by the knowledge of the true way of salvation by faith in the blood of Christ, I consider it a great privilege to be able to teach not only my own kindred but the Roman Catholic people everywhere; and you, Cardinal, and your priests in particular. To every Roman Catholic priest in the world I would say: My brother, you have

been religiously trained, according to Roman ideas, but you have outgrown the fables and superstitions of youth, as I have, and you desire to be a true and honorable man. Will you not, then, come out of the false position in which circumstances have placed you, and learn the way of the Lord through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in whom you believe? The Lord will not make a covenant with you while you are mocking him by giving to the poor credulous people absolutions for sins, when you cannot forgive your own. The Lord will not have mercy on you while you are cheating the souls of the people out of the redeeming merits of Jesus Christ by offering for a price idolatrous masses that they think take the place of the sacrifice of Calvary. Your condition is that of a hypocrite, and you know it. You are not happy in your present position; no man could be. You now fly to stimulants to drown the sorrows of your life, but if you renounce Popery and ask Almighty God to help you the Saviour Jesus will give you change of heart, a new and happy life that shall not depart from you forevermore. Confess Jesus before men, and he will confess you before the Father who is in Heaven. Do not be afraid of the Pope's curses, or of starvation; the Lord will provide all things necessary and good for you. He will speak to his people, and they will open their hearts at his command. The fatness of the

land is now yours in the Church of Rome, but it does not give you contentment or rest; rather do you and I well know that it brings a curse, for the holy name, and grace, and merits of Jesus Christ are prostituted for it. Oh, my brother, do not sell your soul for such a price. All things shall pass away, but the love of Christ abideth forever. In him we have "everlasting life," and with him we shall enter into the kingdom that he has prepared for us. "In my Father's house there are many mansions—if it were not so I should have told you." Yes, my brother; if it were not so would not Jesus have told us when we asked him in sincerity and truth? "I go to prepare a place for you." Come with me to Jesus, my brother priest, and let us ask him to teach us how to bring with us our brethren who are still vainly seeking him in the Church of Rome, and the place he has prepared for us shall be our inheritance forever.

It is only a question of time with many priests to drop the masks they are now wearing, and protest against the infamies they see practised in the name of religion by the wire-pullers of your church. How often have we discussed in Chicago the advisability of introducing an amendment to the constitution of the United States making priests free men, as was done some years ago for the slaves of the Southern States.

LETTER XVIII.

SIR:

How many priests do we see every day with rubicund cheeks and blooming noses, giving evidence of the sensual lives they lead. All priests use intoxicating liquors more freely than other professional men, and thus become dissipated even while they are preaching temperance to the people. A young man usually begins his ministry in the Roman Catholic Church without any vicious habits, even though as a student, in his vacations, he may have been the recipient of a flowing hospitality from some of the priests. But from the day he begins his priestly life the habit of using wine and liquor begins to grow. From the custom of drinking wine every morning, before he takes any food, he is habituated to the constant use of intoxicating liquors. Every morning you say mass, that is, you offer up as a sacrifice in your hands, what you try to make the people believe is the body and blood, soul and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in doing so you drink two glasses of good wine that you say you have magically changed or transubstantiated into the blood of Christ. Now listen, Cardinal! It is the experience of all young priests that for several months after their ordination, when they say mass in the morning, and use the regular quantity of wine at that ceremony, they usually

find their heads a little bit intoxicated. What is the cause of it? If you and the other priests have the power to change the wine into the blood of Christ, why does what is taken at the mass make you feel the same as any glass or two of good wine would.

The "consecrated" wine produces the same results as the wine you use at the dinner table. Should you doubt this, suppose you order your butler to bring up from the cellar a few bottles of your good claret or catawba, and consecrate them. By the teaching of your church, that wine becomes the blood of Christ, yet after you had indulged in it I venture to say you would become the subject of a temperance lecture, as an "awful example." What a profanation this is, that you so audaciously pretend to work a miracle when God himself is the subject of it, and when our reason tells us that you are imposing on the ignorance of your followers. The love of Christ fills the soul with joy, but the blood of Christ, while it cleanseth from all sin, does not make a man drunk. There are few priests' houses all the world over where wine or beer is not used regularly at table, and he is set down as a mean, stingy priest who has not a black bottle of real old rye or bourbon whiskey for his friends when they call to see him. Priests are continually visiting each other and where a man is not socially inclined the saloon-keepers in every town

are the chief men in the parish, and, of course, his special friends. There may be some exceptions to this rule, but they are few.

Now I am not surprised that so many priests become dissipated, nor should Christian men when considering what the daily life of a priest is. But it is a matter of surprise that people should continue to believe that the divine favor and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ can come to them only by the hands of such priests. It is a common saying among Roman Catholics that a priest who is under a ban from dissipation or any other cause, has more "power" than one whose deportment is quite correct. This is why they are so unwilling to hear anything against their priests. Let the priest be a good or bad man, he has the bishop's faculties, or the Pope's commission, to officiate and give the sacraments of salvation to the people, and that is all they want. In Ireland when a priest was "silenced" for any cause, the people came to him from far and near to have cures performed for every kind of disease. Those who had not money to offer him usually took a bottle of whiskey, and under its influence the poor man had no scruple to work as many "miracles" as were desired.

Of course the Church of Rome says that it is not responsible for all this, that it cannot make saints of all its priests, and that bad men are sometimes found in the Protestant churches. But

the Protestant churches quickly dismiss a man from the ministry if his conduct is reprehensible ; whereas in the Roman Church "once a priest, always a priest," is strictly held as one of the cardinal doctrines. The king can do no wrong, was one of the privileges of those monarchs who, in times past, ruled by Divine right, as they said. So with Roman Catholics ; it is the man and not the priest who walks in evil ways. This doctrine has led to the overthrow of dynasties by popular revolutions. It has induced priests and Popes to commit most flagrant crimes when they knew that the people would submit. But as surely as the right divine of kings has departed, never to return so surely will the bogus powers of the priests sink in uttermost darkness before the light of the Gospel and the intelligence that is so gloriously shining all over the world.

LETTER XIX.

SIR:—In the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul tells us that his heart's desire and prayer to God was that his Jewish brethern might be saved. He had known what it was to be zealous in the faith of his fathers, but when he received the fullness of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he earnestly prayed that his co-religionists might be partakers of the same blessing. My condition is not unlike that of Paul. I was zealous in the cause of the Roman Catholic faith until I found that it was not built upon the rock of salvation, Jesus Christ, but upon men and their doctrines. And when Jesus was made known to me as the author and finisher of the faith, and the loving Saviour who wanted my heart that he might take up his dwelling there, I did not resist him. I could not love him by my own natural powers, but I could let him love me ; and the blessing that has come upon me I want others to share, including those whom I left behind me in your church. They are precisely in the condition of the Jews to whom Paul refers : " For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

Surely this is as applicable to the Roman Catholics of the present day as it was to the people of whom the Apostle speaks. The external life of Roman Catholic faith is seen in the church buildings, schools, convents, and other institutions of that church, and these, with the punctual attendance of the people at mass on Sundays, show that they have a zeal of God. But it is not according to knowledge, for they do these things and go to you and other men like you, the heads of their church, to establish their own righteousness, not knowing that, as the apostle continues: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." He is the object towards which the mind and heart of every one must be directed, and those who look to him, and to him alone, attain the righteousness of God. This seemed hard for the Jews to understand; it is just as hard for the Roman Catholic. They sought their own justification in fulfilling the letter of the law, they could not understand how the law was rolled up in the person of Christ. They seemed to say, in despair of attaining this justification, "Oh! if we could get some one to ascend into Heaven and bring Christ down to us, or to descend into the deep and bring him up, we might believe." This wish was an impossibility for those to whom the Apostle refers. He tells them to look into the book of Deuteronomy and there find the same wish expressed (x. 12-13). Paul would do

anything that was within his power to bring his own people to a knowledge of Christ. But he could not do this. Christ had come and made himself known to the people, and if they would not accept his mediatorship in attaining the righteousness of God they must be accountable for their own blindness. It was not necessary for them to look above or beneath, to search the heavens or to cross the seas to find this means of justification that would make them righteous before God. It was to be found in the faith that was preached to them. What Paul could not do for his Jewish brethern, your church does not hesitate to do for the Roman Catholic people. The word of salvation was nigh unto them, he said, even in their mouths and their hearts, that is, in the faith in Jesus Christ that he preached to them. But your church says that is not sufficient, the people cannot understand the word, and Christ must be brought down. And every priest of the Roman Catholic Church, good and bad, holy and unholy, says, "I can bring him down as often as I say mass; I can do what Paul could not, or what God said was vain for any man even to wish to do." And the Roman Catholic people believe this blasphemous boasting.

Before leaving the seminary in Baltimore, immediately before my ordination, the Superior, Dr. Dubreuil, told the class that the office of professors in the seminary was a nigher and a holier

one than that of the Apostles. The latter were the teachers of the gospel to the people, but the former were doing the work that Jesus did while on earth, teaching the Apostles, as the professors were teaching us, the successors of the Apostles. In the Roman Catholic mind the priest is always associated with Christ in the work of salvation. The Lord could not do his work in saving souls without the aid of the priest; even more than that, for he must obey the priest, come when he calls him, take the form of a wafer and be subject to him, as in the mass.

My heart's desire and prayer to God is that the Roman Catholics might be saved, as it was with Paul for the Jews. A representative Jew was that Pharisee who thought the righteousness of God became his when he observed the law and did all the good works required by the law, such as fasting and paying tithes.

The average Roman Catholic in like manner thinks that by obeying your church and observing your laws, his salvation is secured. He fully accepts what St. Paul preached :

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek (or the Protestant and Roman Catho-

lic) for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

This is not sufficient for the Roman Catholic, for your church tells him that he must believe in many other things with the same faith that he believes in Christ, before he can be saved. He must believe with the same firm faith which he has in the Trinity and Incarnation that the Virgin Mary is the mother of God, and that she partakes of the divine attributes; for millions of Roman Catholics are praying to her and asking her for help at the same moment, and all believe that she hears and grants their particular requests.

He must believe in the power of the saints as only a little less than that of Mary, and that it is a duty to pray to every dead person whom the Pope declares to be a saint.

He must believe that the Pope is infallible when he speaks or acts as the head of the church, though he may be the greatest rascal at heart.

He must believe that you, Cardinal, and every Roman Catholic bishop has the power to ordain any man, good or bad, learned or unlearned, and make him a priest.

He must believe that every priest has the powers of calling the Lord Jesus Christ down from Heaven to assume the form of a wafer every time that mass is said, and that the Lord God our Sav-

your must remain in that wafer until it decomposes.

He must believe that every priest has the power of forgiving sins.

He must believe that it is as great a sin to deny the authority of the Pope as to deny the existence of God, or to eat meat on Friday as to blaspheme the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, or to say "bad luck to the Pope" as to curse God.

He must believe in holy water and the seven sacraments and purgatory. I could fill many pages with the doctrines that the Roman Catholic must believe before he can hope to be in the right way of salvation, even though he may have the fullness of faith that the Apostle Paul preached. But enough has been shown to give an idea of the idolatry and superstitions that your church has added to the plan of salvation brought from heaven by the Son of God and handed down to us by the Apostles. The pity of it is, that while the Roman Catholics have the essentials of faith, enough for their salvation, they are covered up by the un-christain additions their church has made to the truth, and are thus made void.

An old writer says that the Church of Christ when first founded by the Apostles, resembled a pillar of pure, spotless marble; but by degrees the Roman Church succeeded in driving a nail into this marble, once so fair and undefiled, and she used this nail to hang on it the vestments of the priests. Then another and many more nails

were added, on which were placed mass-books and rosaries, scapulars and images, just such things as the Pagan Romans were accustomed to use in their worship of gods and goddesses. One big nail was to support a throne for the Virgin Mary, another to hold up the throne of the Pope and his triple crown. In this way the whole pillar was covered, and the people lost sight of it. They saw only the hangings, and forgot the building which they seemed to conceal. But God raised up courageous reformers in the persons of Catholic priests who saw how deceptive the Roman religion was, and they pulled out the nails, and tore down what was suspended to them—vestments, Papal throne, and all—and thus the pillar of the truth was once more made manifest to the whole world, and the people in great numbers turned away from Romanism to embrace it.

You know what the Lord said to those who gave more heed to the commandments and traditions of men than to the commandments of God: "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandments of God, ye hold the tradition of men, * * * making the word of God of none effect through your tradition." (Mark vii).

In my own experience as a Roman Catholic and a priest, I know how true this is of the great mass

of Roman Catholics ; and because their spiritual interests are dear to me I shall endeavor to show the false and untenable position of your church, built as it is on such commandments, traditions and ceremonies, that the truth of God might have full and free scope among them. They have made great and heroic sacrifices for the faith that Rome has given them, and they have received no return. Neither in this world, nor in the world beyond, if the word of God be true, have the Roman Catholics been benefited by the form of christianity that has been preached to them. The Protestant nations of the earth have shown themselves superior to the Catholic nations in all things that tend to the civilization of the race ; and if intelligence, virtue and christian lives be the characteristics of the children of God, surely in this respect there is no need of a comparison between the members of Protostant churches and Roman Catholics.

Yours truly,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER XX.

SIR:—It is the proud boast of your church that Roman Catholics in proportion to their numbers are more regular in their attendance at church than Protestants. This is not true of Protestants who are also church-members. Of the other kind of Protestants, those who

never go to church or Sunday school, I know little. I presume there are some to be found in every community. But even if all the Roman Catholics in the United States should go to church every Sunday, which not one half of them do, they would still be outnumbered by the Methodists or Baptists; and if we count the Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Congregationalists and other branches of the Church of Christ, the Roman Catholics stand only as one to five. In this enumeration the infants and all the children of Roman Catholics are counted, while the actual members only of the churches referred to are included. When a Protestant goes to church it is to unite with his fellow christians in the worship of God. The Roman Catholic goes in obedience to the command of the church that tells him he commits a mortal sin if he does not hear mass. But does he not worship God in hearing mass? The best answer I can give to this question is to describe what the mass is.

Your church teaches that the mass is "The sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, which are really present under the appearance of bread and wine; and are offered to God by the priest for the living and the dead."

To see this "sacrifice" the people go to their churches every Sunday, and with earnestness follow the priest in all that he does while performing the ceremony. The people see the priest on the

altar going through certain motions with his hands, feet, head and body; now the hands stretched out, now the body bent, now the knees and head bowed down. He is all the time muttering words in a foreign language. No one, except another priest or some learned man who is near enough to distinguish the words, understands what is said, for the language used is Latin. The people do not know whether the priest pronounces the words that change the bread and wine into God or not. They presume that he does, but there have been many instances, even in recent years, where priests have not used the words of consecration. Neither do the people know that the elements used in the sacrifice are really bread and wine. I have now in memory a case of actual experience. A certain priest had two churches to attend, and on leaving his residence on a Sunday morning he told the housekeeper to put a bottle of wine into his valise to be used at the distant church. He said the first mass all right, and had proceeded with the second, in which he used the bottle prepared by the housekeeper, until he came to the communion, and while drinking what he thought had been wine he found it was old lager beer. It need scarcely be said there was no sacrifice in that mass, though the people bowed down and worshiped the beer as earnestly as if it had been wine changed into the blood of Christ.

The newspapers recently brought us the intel-

ligence from France that a certain bishop received a cask of wine from a dealer that was pronounced excellent for mass purposes. He recommended all his priests to get their wine from that dealer. The latter could not supply the demand at the moderate price the priests were willing to pay, but he did not like to lose such a good trade, and he sent them another wine of different quality. When the bishop's cask was empty he sent to the dealer for another; but when this was tested it was found to be too largely diluted with alcohol. He was a conscientious bishop, and he immediately issued a pastoral letter telling his priests that the wine they had been using was not the genuine article, in fact was more like brandy than wine, and that all the masses that had been said with that adulterated wine were null and void, and should be said over again in all cases where money had been received for them. The moral of this is that every Roman Catholic who pays a priest for a mass should stipulate that the wine must be genuine.

The mass is said by your church to be a sacrifice, a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead, and the people believe that it is offered for their sins in the same manner that the Son of God offered himself on Calvary for the sins of the world. But St. Paul tells us in his Epistle to the Hebrews that Jesus Christ in his own person is the true propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, and

that in his death was this sacrifice made effectual for us. He does not die every time a priest says mass. In the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans we read, "Knowing that Christ, rising again from the dead, dieth no more, death shall no more have dominion over him. For in that he died to sin, he died once." St. Peter says (1 Peter, iii., 18) "Christ also died once for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might offer us to God." And recurring again to Hebrews we have the word of God for it that our blessed Saviour offered himself as a sacrifice once and only once for us: "Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holies every year with the blood of others. For then he ought to have suffered often from the beginning of the world, but now once at the end of ages, he hath appeared for the destruction of sin, by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and, after this, the judgment: so also Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many; the second time he shall appear without sin, to them that expect him unto salvation." (Heb. ix).

I could go on showing from the word of God that the priest could not, even if he were the holiest being that ever lived, offer up a sacrifice which the Son of God alone had offered once and forever. But the people believe it, and go to church for the purpose of witnessing the ceremony.

After a number of excellent prayers (in Latin of course) the priest proceeds to consecrate the bread and wine. Your church teaches that he does this by using the same words that our Lord used when he sat with his disciples at his last supper. The text from Matthew is as follows: (xxvi. 26-28).

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed and brake and gave to the disciples, and said, take, eat; this is my body.”
“And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

With all reverence do I wish to write on this subject, but let it be remarked here, that if the bread and wine were then changed into the body and blood of Christ, he held his body in his hand and broke it as he gave it to the disciples; and in like manner he held his blood in the cup in his hand as he gave it to them. Now that this did not take place we can see by the next verse, where he says “I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine.” It was still the wine even after he had changed it into his blood, as your church says. It was the same with his body. The bread could not be changed into it, for a member of the body was at the moment speaking of it, and another member was holding it, and the real blood was flowing in the veins of the active body and could not be in the cup

The meaning of this saying of our Lord can be found in the words he uttered at the end of the last supper. As St. Paul explains to us (1 Cor. xi.), and I give the whole passage to show that the Apostles did not believe that the bread and wine were changed into the body and blood of Christ: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me."

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

As I am not writing a treatise that would be beyond the comprehension of even a Roman Catholic child, I need not point out how the words, "this is my body," does not mean, "this is changed into my body," but "this represents or signifies, my body, which is to be broken for you." The body of our Lord was not broken then and there while he was speaking. In many parts of the Bible the same figure of speech is used, as in Genesis xli: "And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, the seven good kine are seven years;

and the seven good ears are seven years;" and in Revelation i, 20: "The seven candlesticks are the seven churches;" and Christ says in the Gospel of St. John (xv, 1.), "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." In our ordinary speech the same mode of expression is used. Go into any Roman Catholic church and ask some old Irish woman, who is praying before a statue or picture, what that is before which she is kneeling, and the answer will be, "the Blessed Virgin Mary," or "St. Joseph," or some other "saint." In many instances the poor creatures imagine that the statues hear their prayers, but intelligent people understand that the statues or pictures merely represent the persons named.

The people bow down in adoration at that part of mass where the priest pronounces the words of consecration. They would not know the right moment if the boys who attend the priest did not vigorously ring the bell or strike the gong to draw their attention to it. The pious Roman Catholic is exhorted by the priest to imagine that Jesus can be seen at that moment actually coming down through the roof of the church to abide in the wafer and the wine, The priest at the communion consumes the wafer and drinks every drop in the chalice, and if there be any people for communion he gives them the wafer only. If the Apostles ever said mass, which they did not, the Blessed Virgin Mary must have taken the

communion with them, and must of necessity, if she believed what the Church of Rome teaches, have eaten her own son. But the Virgin Mary was no Roman Catholic, and so was not guilty of such cannibalism.

In this monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation the people are made to believe that when they receive communion they swallow the Lord Jesus Christ, his body and blood, soul and divinity, his head, feet, finger-nails, hair, toe-nails, muscles, bones, nerves, skin and intestines. Even if they could eat and digest a whole body it is hard to see how that could benefit the soul. And even you will admit that it is as the food of the soul that the Lord gives himself to us in the sacrament of the last supper.

Yours truly,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER XXI.

SIR: From the second chapter of Acts we know how the Lord's Supper was commemorated by the first Christians; and the writers of the succeeding centuries, such as Justin Martyr, Origen, and Tertullian, inform us that during the first three hundred years the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered in the following manner:—After the reading of the holy scriptures, the congrega-

tion praised God in hymns and canticles, and then united in prayer for divine mercy and thanksgiving for blessings. Prayer was offered over the bread and wine, of which the communicants partook in commemoration of the love of Jesus. The bread was broken and the wine poured out by the minister, and handed round by the elders to the people, who received it standing or sitting.

With very slight variations, the churches "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrines and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer."

One of the most singular delusions among Roman Catholic people is that Christ said the first mass. I have explained that the mass is accounted a sacrifice, and if Christ offered himself at the last supper, and again on the cross, one of these two sacrifices must have been superfluous. If Jesus offered himself while sitting at supper with his disciples, how can it be shown that it was necessary to offer himself again on the cross? The truth is there was only one sacrifice by the Lord Jesus Christ; "and after he had offered one sacrifice for sin forever, he sat down on the right hand of God : for by one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified."

I would like to tell how this plain teaching of the Apostles grew into such an unnatural doctrine as that of transubstantiation ; how the word "TRANS-SUBSTANTIATION" was never heard of until the year

1215, and was then introduced by order of Pope Innocent III., at the Fourth Lateran Council; how individuals and whole nations acquiesced in what the Pope said, because darkness of the understanding was general, and whatever learning there was in the world was almost exclusively confined to the priests and monks. But it is not necessary to follow strong delusions that for a time become lies; the truth will prevail over them. It has done so in this case, and will more manifestly in the future as the Roman Catholic people study the Scriptures and think for themselves.

It may be asked, do the priests really believe in this doctrine, and did I believe it when I was a Roman Catholic? Certainly I did, and I know many priests who believe it with a sort of general faith, the same as they believe that death will come some time, but how or when no one knows. But like many persons who act during life as if they did not believe in death or care about it, the majority of priests show by their actions that they do not believe they have the power of changing bread and wine into God. They dare not say so while they are still officiating as priests, but as soon as they become courageous enough to escape from the Roman Catholic priesthood it is a great relief to them to renounce publicly the doctrine of transubstantiation.

During the week of my ordination to the priesthood in Chicago I had a long controversy with

one of the Jesuits about the presence of Christ in the wafer. I brought before him the many cases in history where it is recorded that priests and even Popes were poisoned while saying mass. One case was that of a French priest who had led astray a respectable girl in his parish. When her condition could no longer be concealed she besought him to marry her, and when he refused to do this, saying the laws of France did not recognize the validity of priests' marriages, she begged him to give her sufficient money to take her away from the home she had disgraced. This he also refused to do, but he suggested to her to accuse some of the young men of the neighborhood of her ruin. Stung to madness by such baseness the girl resolved to kill him. One morning she put some poison in the wine that he was to use at mass. The priest said the mass as usual, and was taken sick immediately after the communion. A physician was summoned, but before he arrived, the girl, who had been present in the church during mass, went to the priest and told him what she had done. The priest did not know but he might recover, and to avoid the scandal he told the doctor that he had taken the poison by mistake. He died within a few hours. Many years afterwards the girl made a confession of the crime but no steps were taken to punish her for it.

I asked the Jesuit could the wine with the poison added be changed into the blood of Christ.

He answered, that as the small quantity of water that is always mixed with the wine in the chalice is changed with the wine into the blood, he saw no reason to doubt that a small quantity of poison, even though it be strong enough to cause death, could also be changed with the wine. I was not satisfied with the answer, but I had to believe it, though I knew then as well as now that the blood of Christ could not poison any one.

If we could not be Christians without believing this doctrine, it would not be hard for us to obey God when his will was made known in this respect as in the other articles of faith. But the revealed word of God and our own reason tell us that there is no truth in the assertion of your Church that a priest can change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and that it is not necessary for salvation to receive him into our bodies as we take food to give us strength. Jesus Christ is the food of our souls, and we live in grace by him and in him, according to his promise to abide in us if we observe his commands.

One of the many factors in my conversion from the Roman Catholic faith was the following incident which I found in an old periodical. It was taken from the writings of Blanco White, a Roman Catholic priest of Spain in the first years of the present century. He left his native land and the Roman Catholic Church in 1810, went to England,

studied at Oxford, became an Episcopal minister, and held most intimate relations with John Henry Newman, now Cardinal Newman. Blanco White relates that one day while saying mass in the cathedral of Seville when he came to that part of it where he broke the wafer, as he put one particle of it aside a mouse came out of a crevice in the altar and ran away with it. He made a grasp for the animal, but it was too quick for him and safely got into its hole with the precious wafer. He finished the mass as speedily as possible and told the other clergy what had happened. A decree of death was at once pronounced against the mouse, but it was not so easy to put it into execution. The sexton and his assistants commenced a vigorous search for the sacrilegious thief, and after a time they were successful. A mouse was caught beneath the altar stone and brought to the holy fathers. They ordered it to be dissected to see if any trace of the stolen wafer could be discovered. The poor mouse was cut open, but not even a crumb was found. If this mouse were the veritable thief, sufficient time had elapsed for the purposes of digestion. Blanco White says that he propounded the question to his brother priests, whether the mouse had in reality eaten the Lord Jesus Christ? And the answer of all was, that as the doctrine of transubstantiation by which the wafer was changed into Christ was true, it must be equally true that what the mouse had

eaten was not the wafer, but the body of Christ. If the priest believed that he had really and truly eaten the flesh of the Son of God, his soul and divinity, in the form of a wafer, he must also believe that the mouse had done the same.

When I read this I well remember the blood mounted to my face, and with indignation I cast the book from me. I tried to put away the ideas suggested by the incident, but I could not; and as Blanco White said of himself, he could never get over the disgust for the doctrine of transubstantiation brought on by this event, neither could I overcome the natural repugnance I felt for it. The Pope, or any Roman Catholic, or a mouse can consume that wafer; it tastes like a very thin pie-crust; a dozen of them would give a person dyspepsia as surely as so many pies. I have had some experience of this when consuming the particles in the ciborium after they had been consecrated a couple of weeks. Yet we must believe against the evidence of all the senses as well as of the stomach, that it is not wafers we have been eating but the flesh and blood of the God-man. When the ciborium has not been cleaned for several weeks the priest is not required to eat the particles, for decomposition sets in and the wafer is alive with worms, as any one can see with a microscope. In such cases they are thrown into a hole behind the altar, which is also the receptacle of all the dirty water used by the priest in washing his hands.

One of the things we were told to believe in the seminary was, that a priest could go into a bakery and by pronouncing the words of consecration over the bread change every loaf into the flesh and blood of Christ. Every intelligent person will say this is nonsense, but it is the sober fact, and every priest imagines he has the power to do it.

The greatest argument brought forward by those in the Roman Catholic faith who seek to defend or justify the doctrine of transubstantiation is, that in denying it we doubt or limit the power of God. Why can he not be living in the form of a wafer and be in heaven at the same time? But in rejecting this doctrine of Rome, men do not deny the omnipotence of God. God can do all things that do not involve a contradiction. He cannot make two and two to be five. He cannot deny himself, cannot lie, cannot cease to be in any particular place. He can make a man out of clay, or he can change a horse into a cow, but then the cow thus formed would not be a horse. In the fourth chapter of the book of Exodus the Lord said unto Moses, "Cast thy rod on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it." It was not a rod and a serpent at the same time; it was a real live serpent that I doubt not hissed at Moses. The wafer is a wafer all the time, a piece of bread and nothing else. "And the Lord said unto Moses, put forth thine hand and take it by the

tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand." Here was a rod and a serpent changed alternately by the power of God. In making the wafer the priest's housekeeper (or nuns, to whom that work has been now almost exclusively confined), usually moulds a figure of the crucifixion on it and the poor people in their ignorance imagine that figure to be the living Christ. When the Pope or you or any priest can change a piece of bread into a man, much more into God, and let all the world see it done, then, and not till then, will intelligent people believe in the doctrine of transubstantiation.

Very truly yours,
JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER XXII.

SIR:—A most impressive ceremony was that which was recently held over the remains of the late Archbishop Hughes, when they were transferred from the old St. Patrick's church to the vaults of the cathedral on Fifth avenue. A great concourse of Roman Catholics assembled, the sanctuary was filled with priests and bishops, a large catafalque was erected in front of the altar, on which the coffin was laid. It was fitting that

the memory of the deceased should be honored in such a place, for he was the founder of the cathedral, and built up the diocese over which you now preside to a commanding position in the Roman Catholic Church. He was a distinguished prelate of that church, and fought her battles in this country as no other man did before his time or since. He fulfilled all the duties required of a devout Roman Catholic bishop, and he died with all the rites of his church that are specially appointed to benefit the soul. The desire to pay respect to his memory on this occasion was laudable, even though we condemn the methods pursued. But there was one feature of the ceremony over his remains that has a peculiar significance. A solemn requiem mass was offered for the repose of his soul. And now the question comes up, where is his soul? The consistent Christian believes that when death comes after a life of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and union with him, the soul goes to the home prepared for it "over there." If there were any certainty of this on your part in the case of Archbishop Hughes, you would not have the sacrifice of the mass offered for him, as it would be entirely unnecessary. Every Roman Catholic would scout the idea that the soul of such a champion of their faith should go to hell, "a place of eternal torment." Yet, by the teaching of your church, in offering the mass for his soul, you assume that it has not gone to heaven, the

home of the blessed. And if it be not in heaven or in hell, it must be somewhere between them. Such a place your church has conveniently provided. All Roman Catholic theologians agree in saying that the masses and prayers for the dead are offered on the supposition that the soul prayed for is in purgatory. I take from the catechism that every Roman Catholic child learns the following:—

“What is purgatory? A place of punishment in the other life, where some souls suffer for a time before they can go to heaven.

“Who goes to purgatory? They who die in venial sin.

“What is venial sin? A small sin that hurts the soul by lessening its love for God, and disposing it to mortal sin.

“What is mortal sin? A grievous offence or transgression against the law of God.

“Where shall they go who die in mortal sin? To hell for all eternity.

“Can the souls in purgatory be relieved by our prayers and other good works? Yes; being children of God, and still members of the church, they share in the communion of saints.”

That is all the dogmatic teaching that your church has in reference to purgatory. When I open my text-book on theology, such as we used in the seminary in Baltimore, of which Bishop Bouvier is the author, a standard work in the

Roman Catholic Church, I find some explanations of this dogma. First of all, he says your church has decreed anathema against any one who will not believe in purgatory. The words of the decree of the Council of Trent are: "If any one shall say that, after the reception of the grace of justification, the guilt is so remitted to the penitent sinner, and the penalty of eternal punishment destroyed, that no penalty of temporal punishment remaining to be paid, either in this world or in the future in purgatory, before access to the kingdom of Heaven can lie open, let him be accursed." Some of the old doctors and fathers thought there was an immense cavity in the centre of the earth divided into various compartments. One was hell, which was an immense lake, not composed of water, but of molten brimstone, the sulphuric exhalations of which were lashed into a burning flame. The devil was the ruler of this horrible place, and into it were plunged all the souls that died in mortal sin. Adjoining this was another compartment composed of the same material of fire and brimstone, but not governed by Satan, and into this were cast those who died in venial sin. This was purgatory. The sufferings of the souls were the same in both places—burning and torture without intermission or rest. But those in the purgatory region knew that some time or other, it might be centuries or thousands of years, relief would come to them,

while the inhabitants of hell had no hope of the kind—"out of hell there is no redemption." Bishop Bouvier teaches this, and so do you, Cardinal, and so did I while I was a priest in your church, for I did not know any better, reared and educated as I had been, with only such mental food as your books of theology to nourish my intellect, and the love of Christ kept away from my heart by your abominable superstitions. Bouvier teaches that in purgatory there is a material fire, "like the fire of hell"; and the priest in praying for the souls of the faithful does not ask merely for a place of light and peace, but also for a refrigerator. *Refrigerium* is the word used by Bouvier and the Council of Trent. It means a cooler or cooling-place, but such things we now call refrigerators. Lest you should think I am joking, I give you the whole passage out of Bouvier: "In Purgatorio esse ignem materiale similem igni infernali, et ideo Ecclesiam pro animabus fidelium orantem, non petere tantum locum lucis et pacis, sed et refrigerii, videlicet contra ignis ardorem." There it is, "refrigerium," a cooler or refrigerator. So you prayed for Archbishop Hughes in the ceremony you performed over his remains, "Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him, and take him in honor of our masses and prayers into a refrigerator." He did not deserve this at your hands, Cardinal, for you are now profiting by his labors.

He brought your cathedral almost to a state of completion and made your Church respected by all men in his day. And yet the most you do for him now is to offer up a prayer that he might get out of the fires of purgatory into a refrigerator. And every Roman Catholic who believes in your doctrines can hope for nothing better. After getting the souls out of purgatory the priests will keep them in the refrigerator as long as their friends have a dollar to pay for masses. Freezing must be as bad for the soul of a Catholic as burning, yet the people seem to prefer it. There is no accounting for taste.

What if the soul of the deceased Archbishop be not in purgatory? A recent case came before the courts in which a priest claimed a legacy of seven thousand dollars left him by a man for the purpose of bringing his soul out of purgatory. The judge asked the priest for a receipt, and the latter was about to give him one when his honor asked if the conditions of the legacy would be fulfilled. The priest replied in the affirmative. "Well" said the judge, "give me a receipt saying that for the sum of seven thousand dollars left by the deceased, you guarantee to bring his soul out of purgatory." The priest hesitated and said, "I can not do that; I will say masses for his soul, but cannot guarantee that they will bring him out of purgatory; God only knows when he will be let out"

"Is there such a place as purgatory?" inquired the judge.

"There is," said the priest.

"Where?"

"I do not know; somewhere in the other world."

"But this money belongs to this world," said the judge, "and before it is paid to you the court must know what will be done with it. The deceased left it for the purpose of bringing his soul out of purgatory. I ask you where purgatory is, and you tell me you do not know. Let me ask you, do you know whether the soul of the deceased is in purgatory?" The priest was non-plussed. He wished he was out of the court, but he had to answer. "I presume his soul is in purgatory," said he. "Presumption or hearsay is not evidence," said the judge sharply. "If you do not know where purgatory is, or that the soul of the deceased is now there, you are not entitled to this legacy. I do not believe there is any such place as purgatory." Here a lawyer in court interrupted, and said there was such a place, and the priest who was testifying was now in it, as his honor could see by observing his pitiful condition; and sure enough, the priest's face was crimson with shame and mortification, as he sat with bowed head, unable to prove that there was such a place as purgatory, or that the soul of the deceased was there. The money is still un-

claimed in the court's possession, and there it will remain, I venture to say, until the end of the world.

Neither can you prove to me, Cardinal, that the soul of your predecessor, Archbishop Hughes, is now in Purgatory.

The arguments adduced by Roman Catholic theologians to sustain the doctrine of purgatory are of the flimsiest character. The chief Scriptural proof is taken from Matt. xii., 32. Now, because the sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven, either in this world or the world to come, it does not by any means follow that there are some sins which will be forgiven in the next world. The meaning of the text evidently is that this sin can never be forgiven either in this world or in the next.

Reliance is also placed on the passage in St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (iii., 11-15): "He shall be saved, yet so as by fire," "and the fire shall try every man's work." This word "fire" is really what the people believe of purgatory. The text does not at all imply that this "fire of tribulation" is reserved for the other world. Every faithful christian has to go through it here on earth. That is the essential condition of being a true christian. A man's work built by faith in Jesus Christ shall be made manifest, not built on him it shall perish; yet, though the work come to naught, there is time for repent-

ance while life lasts. That time does not come after death. God sees us all in sin, and he makes it known to us that our condition is as dangerous as that of a man in a burning house. His voice calls us to come out or we shall perish. Jesus, his own beloved Son, is the messenger he sends to warn us of our danger. One who is demented will not know whether he ought to go out or stay where he is, but one who has faith will hear the voice calling him and obey.

In St. Peter's First Epistle (iii., 18-20), it is said that Christ went to the spirits in prison and preached to them. This is supposed to mean purgatory. But we are not told that any of those prisoners who were disobedient in the days of Noah were let cut. Your church teaches that all the saints who died before Christ were in this prison, and that he went there to tell them they were now free. But this is mere guess work, and the subject is too sacred to joke or guess about it. I knew a man in Chicago who, on All Souls' Day, when the priest was taking down the names of those who wished the mass to be offered for the souls of their departed friends, said that he had no relatives dead that he knew of. He held five dollars in his hand, and the priest not wishing to lose that sum, said that the mass could be offered for any dead person, whether for a relative or not. "Among all the dead that I ever heard of," said the man, "there

is not one that I care about more than I do about Eve." "Well," said the priest, "you can get mass said for Eve." "Can I?" inquired he. "Yes," said the priest. "Did any one ever get a mass said for her soul?" "Not that I am aware of." "Then it is time that some one should remember her. She committed a big sin in her day, and though I suppose God forgave her, she had to suffer some temporal punishment after death. Take this five dollars, father, and divide it between herself and Adam."

The priest took the money, and, as I happen to know that he was an honest man, he said the mass.

I quoted the theologian, Bishop Bouvier, who says that the fire of purgatory is like the fire of hell, and that in prayers for those who are in purgatory, Almighty God is petitioned to give them not merely a place of light and peace, but a refrigerator against the heat of this fire. No one has ever presumed to determine how long the punishment of purgatory lasts, and, therefore, it must be a matter of indifference whether the soul is burning or freezing for an indefinite period.

From the cradle to the grave the Church of Rome imposes on her followers by the assertion of her authority to control and direct them ; and the services of the priests in ministering to the people must be paid for in hard cash. There is no credit for baptisms, marriages, dispensations

and masses. But the refinement of cruelty seems to have been reached when the heaviest tax of all is placed upon the biers of the loved ones departed. More money comes to a priest from masses for the dead than from any other source. I know this by my own experience. When death enters a family there must be solemn requiem mass, which, costs from five to fifty dollars according to the number of priests engaged in it and the quality of the music. In many of the churches the masses are announced from the altar on Sunday, so that the honor of having a requiem mass might be some solace to the afflicted friends of the deceased. The usual announcement is, "Your prayers are requested for the repose of the soul of Teddy McAfferty, for whom a grand high requiem mass will be offered up tomorrow. All the friends of the deceased and all who desire to pray for the poor suffering souls in purgatory are invited. You know, my brethern, what holy Job says, have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends, for the hand of the Lord has touched me. So the souls of your deceased friends are crying out to you to have mercy on them, for the hand of God is heavy on them. They cannot do anything for themselves now, suffering as they are in the fires of purgatory, but you can help them by getting masses said for them. Is there any one in this congregation who does not feel the heart moved at the

contemplation of the sufferings of your loved ones departed. Most piteously are they crying out to you from the depths of Purgatory, have pity on us, have pity on us. In a few years you will be numbered among the dead, your bodies laid beside those whom you carried to the grave only a short time ago. Then you will wish that friends here on earth should have masses said for your souls. Do you think they will do so if you do not now set them the good example?"

In Italy the priests exhibit large paintings in which the souls in purgatory appear struggling fiercely to get out. A priest is saying mass, with another priest beside him holding a rope in his hand as he stoops down peering into the place of torture, and calling the names of those for whom the mass is being said, announcing to them that they are released. The poor ignorant people imagine that in this way souls are hauled up out of purgatory, and are thus cheated in the most shameful manner under the cloak of religion. The high requiem mass and incense and sprinkling of holy water over the remains of Archbishop Hughes, were not the less calculated to deceive the Roman Catholics by showing that not even such a man, great as he was in your church, could be exempt from the fires of purgatory.

Yours truly,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER XXIII.

SIR: It may seem as if I was giving too much attention to the doctrine of Purgatory, to the exclusion of more serious subjects. But you and I know how important an article of faith it is with every Roman Catholic, and what a mine of wealth it is to the priests. No Roman Catholic expects to go to heaven immediately after death. Even though he should repent and receive the last sacraments of the priest, if he can get into purgatory he will consider himself fortunate, for he knows that if he got his deserts, he might go farther and fare worse. "The Lord will not send me to hell, if I make a good confession, and be anointed before I die," is the firm conviction of every Roman Catholic from the pope downwards. However sinful the life might be, there is still the hope of Heaven, away beyond purgatory. From this life to the other, therefore, means not from earth to heaven, or to the home of the blessed, but to the fire of purgatory, at least for a time. That this is not the teaching of Christ or his apostles, is evident from every part of the Scriptures where the promises of God are held out to those who serve Him. "Therefore, being justified by faith,

we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God," says St. Paul. There is neither peace nor joy in purgatory, nothing but suffering and burning, "like the fire of hell." Every priest, however, has the power of affording relief to the poor suffering souls, and he is ready to do it every day if he be well paid for his trouble. More money is received from masses for the dead than from any other source of revenue in the Roman Catholic Church. It is customary for many priests to put the money offerings for masses into one fund, and offer them indiscriminately at their own convenience. There are few Roman Catholics who do not sincerely repent when death is seen approaching. They have faith in God, and have great confidence in the mercy of Christ. The priest is called in to hear the last confession and give the last absolution. He represents Jesus Christ in the eyes of the dying Romanist. He holds the Redeemer of all men in his hand as he gives the viaticum to the sufferer; he anoints him with oil, and offers the last prayer for the departing soul. That poor soul desires most earnestly, even with the last breath, to be united with its Creator through the atonement that Jesus Christ had made for it. There is no more sin or sorrow in this world, all that is passing away. The blessed Saviour is calling upon that soul to come to him: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I

will give you rest." What an invitation this is! How often have I directed the thoughts of the dying as I sat by the bedside when attending sick calls, to Jesus on the cross—his blood poured out to wash away all stain of sin from the soul that believed in him, his arms extended to welcome and bless all who will come to him, and his prayer to God for all who have sinned: "Father, forgive them, for they knew not what they did." When the dying malefactor said, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," Jesus said to him, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise." Had I not good reason to hold out words of encouragement and hope to the dying Roman Catholics who had faith in that Saviour? Yet I now look back with a pang of the heart at my own insufficient, or rather, distorted faith at that time. Many a dying person said to me, "Do you think, when all is over that God will receive me into heaven?" I used to answer, "yes, by trusting in the merits of Jesus Christ, and being sincerely sorry for all your past sins." "I am truly sorry, and I love my Saviour with all my heart; why can I not go to him directly?" I could only reply that the doctrine of the church was that the soul could not go to heaven until the justice of God should be satisfied in purgatory, until the "last farthing" should be paid. The only consolation I could offer was that by prayers, masses and indulgences, the term of punishment in purgatory

could be lessened. The Lord in his great mercy has since taught me differently. If any one has faith in Christ, with repentance and hearty sorrow for sin, there is every hope of an eternal union with God after this life is ended. The only question each one has to ask himself is, "Am I a christian—do I love my Saviour with all my heart?" If there be a certainty of this, "and the Spirit witnesseth with our spirit that we are the children of God," then we can say with St. Paul, "There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," no condemnation to punishment either in hell or in purgatory. We are persuaded that "God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." (1 Thess. v.) The only thing that can separate the soul from God is sin, and when sin is washed away by the blood of Christ, nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

Your church, Cardinal, will never give up the doctrine of purgatory while it is such a source of revenue to the priesthood; but the people will search the scriptures, and not finding such a place even so much as named therein, they will turn away from you and serve the Lord their God, as he directs them by his blessed word.

Yours truly,

JAMES A. O'CONNER.

LETTER XXIV.

SIR: St. Patrick's day, March 17, is a great day for Ireland in America, and according to custom, the Roman Catholics march in procession with green banners, and bands of music playing "Garryowen" and "Patrick's Day in the Morning" to honor him.

Of course the claim is put forth by your church that St. Patrick was a Roman Catholic. There lived in Dublin, some years ago, a learned clergyman, Rev. Tresham Gregg, who made a great stir by his writings, showing that St. Patrick was not a Roman Catholic. I have not his book by me at the moment, or I would give you some of the arguments he adduced in support of his position. But I have a work of great merit, "The History of the Irish Primitive Church," by Rev. Daniel DeVinne. The author of this excellent book was an Irish Roman Catholic, but was converted in early manhood and became a Methodist preacher. Until his death he was one of the oldest Methodist ministers in the world. It was my privilege to receive a copy of his book from his own hands, with many blessings on my labors for the enlightenment of our Irish Catholic brethren. His life was full and well-rounded, and he departed rejoicing in the promises of his Saviour, that he had a home prepared for him.

Within the space of a letter I can only summarize the chief points in relation to St. Patrick. All writers agree that he was born towards the end of the fourth century, of Gallic parents. He was captured and taken to Ireland in one of the periodical excursions of the Irish to the shores of Gaul. It is said he was brought by Melcho, a chieftian who lived in the county Antrim. His occupation was the herding of sheep and cattle on the mountain-side. He was converted to God, as he tells us in his "Confessions," which are accounted genuine by all historians. "My constant business," he says, "was to feed the flock. There the Lord brought me to a sense of my unbelief, that I might remember my sins, and that I might be converted with all my heart unto the Lord my God, I was earnest in prayer. The love and fear of God more and more inflamed my heart. My faith increased and my soul was strengthened, so that I said a hundred prayers a day, and almost as many by night. I was not weary, for the Spirit of the Lord was warm in me." He fortunately made his escape, and was joyfully received by his parents. His father was a priest or deacon, and he placed the youth in a school near Tours. It is said that St. Martin, of Tours, was Patrick's uncle. Like St. Paul, Patrick had a vision of a young man who came to him with a letter, on which was written "Vox Hibernaecum," (the Irish call). While holding it in his hand he heard a voice saying: "We

entreat thee, holy youth, to come and walk among us." He obeyed the call, and carried the Gospel to the Irish. In his "Confessions" there is not the slightest intimation that he was sent there by the Pope: "God directing me, I obeyed no one in coming to Ireland." The people gladly listened to his preaching, and many conversions followed. His teaching was wholly evangelical, and he did not hesitate to denounce the horrid sacrifices offered by the Druidical priests. He established churches and schools in all parts of the island. In those churches there were none of the peculiarities of popery, neither masses nor prayers to saints; and the Virgin Mary is not even mentioned in Patrick's writings. He says "There is no other God except God the Father Almighty, who is without beginning, and from whom is every beginning, upholding all things; and that we make known his Son Jesus Christ, who was before the beginning of the world, spiritually with the Father, through whom every thing visible and invisible was made; and being made man and having died, was received into heaven with the Father, and to him is given all power, above every name that is in heaven or on earth, or that is beneath, that every tongue may confess that Jesus is the Lord God, in whom we believe and for whose coming we are waiting; who will also make those who believe and are obedient, to become the sons of God the Father, and joint heirs with Christ, whom we confess

and adore, one God, in the Trinity of the sacred name." Such is the creed of Patrick, and every Christian, but a Roman Catholic must believe more than that. The faith of Patrick is not sufficient. Evidently Patrick was not a Roman Catholic. He died on March 17, 465. The fruits of his preaching and evangelical labors were seen in the churches established, and the number of missionaries that were sent out from them in the years after his death to carry the Gospel to the barbarians of central Europe. The Irish Church was among the purest of the churches then in Christendom. The Popes of Rome had no authority over it in the days of St. Patrick, or for centuries afterwards.

The learned Roman Catholic historian, O'Driscoll, in his "Views of Ireland," says:—"The Christian Church of that country, as founded by St. Patrick, existed for many ages free and unshackled. For 700 years the church maintained its independence. It had no connection with England, and differed on points of importance with Rome. The first work of Henry II. was to reduce the Church of Ireland into obedience to the Roman Pontiff. Accordingly, he procured a council of Irish clergy to be held in Cashel in 1172; and the combined intrigues of Henry and the Pope prevailed. This council put an end to the ancient Church of Ireland, and submitted to the yoke of Rome. This ominous apos-

tacy has been followed by a series of calamities hardly to be equalled in the world. From the days of Patrick to the council of Cashel was a bright and glorious career for Ireland. From the sitting of this council to our times the lot of Ireland has been an unmingled evil, and all her history a tale of woe." Ireland became subject to England and Rome at the same time. An Englishman became Pope, and took the name of Adrian IV. He knew how independent the Church of Ireland was, and he resolved to bring it under his authority. This he could do only by the aid of the king of England. Accordingly he gave Henry the following permission to subjugate the island. This is the famous bull of Adrian IV.:

“ADRIAN, BISHOP, *Servant of the servants of God: To his most dear son in Christ, the Illustrious King of the English, Greeting and Apostolical benediction:*

“The design of your greatness is praiseworthy and most useful to extend the glory of your name on earth, and to increase the reward of your eternal happiness in heaven; for as becomes a Catholic prince, you intend to extend the limits of the Church, to announce the truth of the Christian religion to an ignorant and barbarous people, and to pluck up the seeds of vice from the fields of the Lord, while, to accomplish your designs more effectually, you implore the counsel and aid of

the Apostolic see. The more exalted your views, and the greater your discretion in this matter, the more confident are our hopes that, with the help of God, the result will be more favorable to you. Whatever has origin in ardent faith and love of religion, always has prosperous end and issue. Certainly it is beyond a doubt (and the nobility itself has recognized the truth of it), that Ireland, and all the islands that Christ, the Son of Justice, has shone upon, and which have embraced the doctrines of the Christian faith, belong of right to St. Peter and the holy Roman Church; we, therefore, the more willingly plant them with a faithful plantation, that a very rigorous account must be rendered of them. Thou hast communicated to us, our very dear son in Christ, that thou wouldst enter the island of Ireland, to subject its people to obedience of law, to eradicate the seeds of vice, and, also, to make every house pay the tribute of ONE PENNY to the blessed Peter, and preserve the rights of the Church of that land whole and entire. Receiving your laudable and pious desire with the favor it merits, and granting our kind consent to your petition, it is our wish and desire that, for the extension of the limits of the Church, the checking of the torrent of vice, the correction of morals, the sowing of the seeds of virtue, and the propagation of the religion of Christ, thou shouldst enter that island, and there execute what thou shalt think condu-

cive to the honor of God and the salvation of that land ; and let the people of that land receive thee with honor, and venerate thee as their lord, saving the rights of the Church, which must remain untouched and entire, and the annual payment of ONE PENNY from each home to St. Peter and the holy Church of Rome. If thou wishest to carry into execution that thou hast conceived in thy mind, endeavor to win that people to good morals ; and both by thyself and those men whom thou hast proved duly qualified in faith, in words, and in life let the church of that country be adorned, let the religion of the faith of Christ be planted and increased, and all that concerns the glory of God and the salvation of souls be so ordained by thee that thou mayest deserve to obtain from God an increase of thy everlasting reward, and a glorious name on earth in all ages.

“Given at Rome, A. D. 1154.”

The bull of Pope Alexander III., who, twenty years afterwards, ratified the bull of Adrian, is of the same import. This document was addressed to the same Henry II. of England, in 1172, and runs thus :—

“Alexander Bishop, servant of the servants of God, to our well-beloved son in Christ, the illustrious King of the English, health and apostolic benediction: Forasmuch as those grants of our predecessors which are known to have been made on reasonable grounds, are worthy to be confirmed

by a permanent sanction. We, therefore, following in the footsteps of the late venerable Pope Adrian, and in expectation also of seeing the fruits of our earnest wishes on this head, ratify and confirm the permission of the said pope, granted you in reference to the dominion of the kingdom of Ireland—reserving to blessed Peter and the holy Roman Church the annual payment of ONE PENNY for every house—to the end that the filthy practices of that land may be abolished, and the barbarous nation which is called by the Christian name, may, through your clemency, attain unto some decency of manners.”

How the custom of paying “Peter’s Pence,” or taking up collections for the Pope, originated, few Irishmen have any knowledge of. We see in the above bulls, that it was a part of the compact of Rome with England, that every Irish family should pay the Pope a penny to be Romanized—civilized the Popes call it; and the years from that time to the present testify to the “civilization” that Ireland has received from her connection with Rome.

From the above bulls it is evident that even the Popes did not consider Ireland a Roman Catholic country. They sold it to England for a penny for every house. If the Irish to-day complain of the union with England, they should remember that it was Roman Popes who handed their country over to the English ruler. The Fenians, Land Leaguers,

and other revolutionary societies, are making war on the government of England in our day, in order to effect a separation between the two countries. But they should first direct their energies towards accomplishing a separation from that system of religion that is a caricature of that which Patrick established in Ireland. The Irish, either in their native land or in America, can never comprehend what true liberty or freedom is, until their souls are free from the debasing influence of popery. When they return to the religion that Patrick preached, founded on the Scriptures alone, and which caused their country to be known throughout Christendom as the "Island of Saints," they may expect to be respected and trusted by the liberty-loving nations of the earth. But as long as they are papists, they cannot be received into the household of freedom any more than into the household of the faith by Christian nations. Let them renounce popery, with all its superstitions, and turn to the religion of the Bible that the Lord Jesus Christ established, and that the apostles and Patrick preached, and all the civilized nations of the world will rejoice. Contrast the Protestants of Ireland with the Roman Catholics, and it can readily be seen what a beneficial effect the teaching of God's word would have on that country. An Irish Protestant is not accounted an Irishman at all, neither is a converted Catholic. But the Roman Catholic is always held

up as the typical Irishman, poor ignorant, riotous, superstitious and priest-ridden. Such an Irishman will curse the Bible and blaspheme the name of the Most High; but if the Roman church is assailed, or if he should hear the words "bad luck to the Pope" his anger is aroused, and he shows himself in his true colors.

All the world can see that what Ireland needs to-day is to be free from the unchristian system of religion that Rome has imposed on her. Much surprise has been expressed that the great Reformation should have made so slight an advance in Ireland. Under the superstitious doctrines of Rome from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, the Irish became so ignorant and debased that it was not a reformation of Christianity they needed, but the planting of the Gospel seed anew by an apostle like Patrick.

And what a sad history is that of Ireland for the last three hundred years. We see its outgrowth in the present generation in the disorder that reigns throughout the unfortunate country. If the Roman Catholics had the Gospel of Christ preached to them instead of the doctrine of Rome, they would be truly the "Children of God," and by their piety and zeal for religion would be exemplars of holiness to all Christians. They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, for their church purposely keeps them in ignorance of the truths of religion. My heart's desire

and prayer to God is, that they might be saved from the curse that the union with Rome has brought upon their country—that they might learn that salvation can be had, without money and without price, from the blessed Son of God whom Patrick preached to them, and that they might see the truth, be converted, and live in Christ Jesus, and be received by him in the eternal mansions he has prepared for those who love him and serve him. “I will receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also,” he says. You and your priests tell our Irish brethren that unless they believe in the Pope and his Church, the Lord will take back his words, that he will exclude them and send them to the bottomless pit. You place your signature on the Lord’s promise and say it is of no effect unless your endorsement is accepted. Out upon your Roman additions that make the word of God of no effect! May the good God in his mercy free the Irish people in their native land from the yoke of bondage that Rome has held them in, as he is doing to-day in America.

Here common sense has obtained the mastery over superstition and ignorance, and as enlightened ideas have entered their minds they have learned to estimate the true value of the observance of St. Patrick’s day. It has long since ceased to be a religious festival, for your Church is fast losing its hold on the people; and this is

especially true of the descendants of the Irish in America. They have the advantage of education in American public schools, the influence of enlightened citizens around them, the stimulus of social advancement and distinction in all the walks of life, and above all the knowledge that they can become free children of God, and fulfil the highest law of their being by serving him on earth by noble Christian lives and being united with him in heaven when "life's fitful fever is o'er." Their parents were born in poverty, cradled in ignorance, nurtured in superstition, and confirmed in the vices peculiar to the lower nature of man, by your Church withholding from them the light of Christianity. Thank God for the open Bible and the public schools of America that are giving light and freedom even to the children of the slaves of Rome.

I can remember fifteen years ago when the "Feast of St. Patrick" was observed as the greatest national holiday of the Irish race all over the world. The Roman Catholic churches thronged with worshippers of the good Saint; traffic in the streets of all the large cities suspended for hours to allow the monster processions of Irishmen, led by German bands of music, to pass by; and the rum-shops dispensing the fiery liquor that Irishmen love so well, till late into the night—all in honor of St. Patrick. Less than ten years since there were 20,000 Irishmen in the

St. Patrick's day parade in this city, and in the year 1874 I witnessed a procession of 10,000 in Chicago. To-day I stood for half an hour in Union Square to observe the usual parade. Alas! how times have changed. Not more than 2,000 men shambled along in their shabby regalia, and there was not a shadow of enthusiasm in the face of one of them. It was like a funeral cortege. I noticed in one of the banners the inscription: "St. Patrick cares for the living and buries the dead." The crowd around me laughed heartily when a bystander remarked, "Begorra, that's not true, for St. Patrick is so dead himself that he could not get up a decent procession in his honor to-day." And another said, "Indeed, 'tis the truth you say, for I saw more persons and a grander turn-out at the funeral of Billy McGlory, the saloon-keeper, who died last week." While yet another volunteered the information that the reason the procession was so small was because St. Patrick was in trouble about the doings of the Land League. I turned to the speaker and asked how was that? "Why you see, sir," he answered, "since all the money we can earn now is going to the Land League, instead of the 'Holy Father' and the Church, as it used to do some years ago, St. Patrick is so mad that he would not stir them up to-day." I confess this was new to me, and I longed for further information. As pleasantly as I could, I observed to the last speaker that surely,

that could hardly be, for St. Patrick was one of the greatest Irishmen that ever lived and must naturally take a deep interest in the affairs of that country. "He wasn't an Irishman at all," he blurted out, "but a foreigner, and there's where we have been making fools of ourselves these last hundreds of years—marching like clowns at a show, getting drunk and breaking each other's heads in his honor, because we thought he was a genuine first-class Irishman." "How did you come to believe that he was an Irishman?" I asked. "Why," said he, "wern't we all taught in the old song that—

' St. Patrick was a gentleman,
And came from decent people,
His father was the carpenter
That built the church and steeple;
No wonder that the Saint himself
Should understand distilling,
Since his mother kept a shebeen shop
In the town of Enniskillen.' "

I had quite forgotten this brief pedigree of St. Patrick until I was reminded of it by this incident, and as I walked away from the group of my beloved countrymen, it struck me that the statement contained in the doggerel verses was as true as that generally received by the great mass of Irishmen regarding the person who introduced Christianity into Ireland in the fifth century. It is only within the past few years they have learned St. Patrick was not an Irishman, and later still the

Scriptural truth that he was no more a Roman Catholic than was the blessed Virgin Mary. If I had made this statement to the group around me in Union Square, it would have involved me in a fight with my rough countrymen, and as the odds were against me I held my peace. If the Irish element were taken out of the Roman Catholic Church in America, seven-eighths of its numbers and all its enthusiastic devotion and slavish obedience to you and your priests would disappear. The special emissary whom the Pope sent to this country this year to "convert" wealthy Protestants, Monsignor Capel, has said that out of 150,000 Roman Catholics in London not more than 10,000 are English; they are all Irish. This is also true of Roman Catholics in America—they are nearly all Irish; and it is for them I write.

In closing this letter let me commend to my Irish brethren the words of St. Paul: "But we exhort you, brethren, that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and may have need of nothing." (1 Thes. iv., 11, 12.)

Yours truly,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER XXV.

SIR: I hope the preceding letter will be of some interest and service to Irishmen "at home and abroad." At all events it will be a ready weapon in the hands of their descendants to oppose one of the pretences of your Church, that the Popes of Rome were always well-disposed towards the people of Ireland. Here it is right to say that the bulls of Adrian IV. and Alexander III. are anathematized by the Irish nationalists and revolutionists, Roman Catholics though they be, as heartily as the Popes themselves ever cursed the Protestant heretics who thought it better for their souls' salvation to serve God than man. Yet their ill-will against Adrian and Alexander does not deprive those characters of that quality of infallibility that distinguishes a Pope from the rest of mankind. If the present Pope be infallible, as his predecessor, Pius IX., declared himself to be, all former Popes and all future ones must be likewise infallible.

The decree of the Vatican Council held in Rome in 1870, is clear on this point. I quote the concluding paragraph of that decree: "Therefore, faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, for the glory of God our Saviour, the exaltation of the Roman Catholic religion, and the salvation of Christian people, the Sacred Council approving, we teach

and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed: that the Roman pontiff, when he speaks 'ex-cathedra,' that is, when, in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith and morals; and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irrevocable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church.

"But if anyone presume to contradict this our definition;

"LET HIM BE ACCURSED.

"Given at Rome in public session, solemnly held in the Vatican Basilica, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy, on the eighteenth day of July, in the twenty-fifth year of our Pontificate."

Elsewhere in this decree it is said, "This gift (infallibility) was conferred by heaven upon Peter and his successors in this see of Rome." According to this definition every Pope of Rome was, is, and will be infallible. I will put it in syllogistic form:

The Vatican Council has declared that the Pope of Rome is infallible even without the consent of the Church;

Pius IX. was then Pope ;
Therefore Pius IX. was infallible.
Now as regards the present man in Rome :
The Pope is infallible ;
Leo XIII. is Pope ;
Therefore Leo XIII. is infallible.

Of course if one Pope is infallible as such, every man who has been Pope must be likewise infallible. Hence the following syllogism is true:

Every Pope is infallible ;

Adrian IV. was Pope ;

Therefore Adrian IV., who sold Ireland to the English King, whose successors have been ruling Ireland for more than seven hundred years, was infallible.

And Alexander III., who confirmed the sale to Henry II. in 1172, was infallible, because he was Pope.

Another illustration of this "infallibility" of Popes in courting the favor of the powers of the earth, and one of some significance to all English-speaking peoples, is the bull conferring on the rulers of England the title of "Defender of the Faith." This bull was sent by Pope Leo X. to Henry VIII. in the same year that Martin Luther was battling with both for the truth and purity of the Christian religion. History tells us what a character Henry VIII. was, yet we see him blessed and almost deified by the Pope of Rome. The ques-

tion is pertinent, did Leo re-call the blessings he sent the King, or did he exchange them for curses?

Henry became the greatest foe of the Roman Church a few years later, but he retained the title of Defender of the Faith, and it has been used by every ruler of England from his time. On all English coins you can observe the words, "Victoria, by the grace of God, Queen, Defender of the Faith."

Let Roman Catholics draw their own conclusions from the perusal of this bull sent by Leo to Henry, and let them ask some priest of Rome to draw the line that separates infallibility from stultification. The bull of Leo to Henry, taken in connection with that of Adrian, will be of special interest to our Irish brethren, and hence I have great pleasure in bringing it to light from the dusty pages of history:

"Leo, Bishop, servant of the servants of God, to our very dear son in Christ, Henry, king of England, Defender of the Faith, health and Apostolic benediction.

"By the will of the Most High, though our deserts are unworthy of it, we are governor of the universal Church, and to the end that the Catholic faith, without which none can be saved, may receive continual increase, we send abroad far and wide the thoughts of our heart; and that the things which have been set in order by the sound learning of Christ's faithful ones, specially those invested with royal rank, to put down the efforts

of such as essay to depress this faith, or, by wicked and lying inventions, to pervert and blacken it, may advance with continued increase, we devote the office and service of our ministry.

“Furthermore, even as other Roman Pontiffs, our predecessors, have been used to bestow special favors on Catholic Princes, as times and circumstances required, specially on such as in stormy times and amid the mad raging of perfidious schismatics and heretics, have not only stood firm in the faith, and in whole-hearted devotion to the holy Church of Rome, but who have also, like true sons of the Church, and valiant champions, both spiritually and temporally, opposed the mad rage of schismatics and heretics: in like manner, we too desire to exalt your Majesty with meet and immortal praises for your grand services towards us and this sacred seat, in which, by divine permission, we sit; and, further, to make you such grant as shall bind you to keep away, with all watchfulness, wolves from the Lord’s flock, and to cut off by the civil sword rotten members, which defile the mystical body of Christ, and to firmly strengthen in faith the hearts of wavering believers.

“Indeed, when lately our beloved son, John Clerk, your majesty’s ambassador to us, in our consistory, in presence of our worshipful brethren, the Cardinals of the holy Roman Church, and sundry other prelates of the Roman Curia, handed to us for our examination and approval, the book composed by your Majesty out of a charity which doeth its best in everything, and nothing badly, and inflamed with zeal for the Catholic faith, and warm devotion towards us and this holy See, as a famous and salutary antidote

against the errors of divers heretics, often condemned by this holy See, and lately revived and renewed by Martin Luther; and when he further, in a speech of great clearness, gave us to know that, as your Majesty had refuted the notorious errors of the aforesaid Martin by true and unanswerable arguments from Holy Scripture and the authority of holy Fathers, so you were ready and disposed to follow up with arms, and the whole force of your kingdom, all who should presume to follow and uphold those errors; and when we had examined carefully and closely the book, with its excellent doctrine, sprinkled with the dew of heavenly grace—we gave hearty thanks to Almighty God, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, for giving you a spirit inclined to all good, and vouchsafing to pour upon you from above grace, enabling you to defend, by your writing, his holy faith against the reviver of such damnable errors.

“Moreover, deeming it only right to bestow all praise and honor on such as have piously labored in such defence of the faith of Christ, and wishing not only to exalt and magnify with due praise, and to confirm and sanction by our authority your Majesty’s writings against the aforesaid Luther—writings perfect in doctrine and in style—but also to decorate your Majesty with an honor and title, which shall tell all Christ’s faithful people in our own times and all time to come how we have prized your Majesty’s gift, especially considering its timely appearance, we have resolved to confer on your Majesty the title of DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, even as we decorate you with such title by these presents, and we hereby charge all Christ’s faithful people to speak

of your Majesty by this title, and in writing to you, to add to the style of King that of 'Defender of the Faith.'

"And in truth, after carefully weighing and considering the pre-eminence and dignity of this title, and also your unique services, we could not have devised a name either more worthy or more appropriate. For whenever you hear or read it, you will be reminded of your own worth and your excellent service; nor will you let this title puff you up or exalt you to pride, but with your wonted wisdom you will become yet more humble, and yet stronger and firmer in the faith of Christ and in your devotion to this holy See, the fountain of your exaltation.

"Furthermore, you will rejoice in the Lord, the Giver of all good, to leave this as an everlasting memorial of your glory to your posterity, and lead them, in case they too desire to be graced with the like title, to desire to perform like deeds, to follow in the famous footsteps of your Majesty.

"According to your admirable service to us and the See aforesaid, we bless you, with your wife and sons, and all who shall hereafter be born from you and them, in the name of him who hath given us power to bless, with bountiful and liberal hand; and we beseech the Most High who hath said, 'By me kings reign and princes rule, in whose hand are the hearts of kings,' to confirm you in your holy resolution, and increase your devotion, and by your noble doings for the holy faith, make you so famous in the eyes of the world that none shall be able to challenge the judgment which we have expressed of you in investing you with this eminent title; and lastly,

when your mortal course is over, to make you a partaker of the everlasting glory.

“Done at Rome, in St. Peters, October 11th, in the year of our Lord, 1521, and ninth year of our Pontificate.

“LEO X.”

An infallible Pope should have as much wisdom at least as a weather prophet. From the Irish point of view the Popes I have referred to did not prove themselves more infallible in earthly affairs than the rest of mankind. What evidence have we that they were infallible in spiritual things? None at all. The Pope is as liable to commit a mistake as you or any other man, and the greatest mistake he or you can commit is to imagine that intelligent people can be always deceived by your false teaching. They will search the Scriptures, and by the grace of God find the way of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ without you or the Pope.

Very truly yours,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER XXVI.

SIR: In these letters I cannot too often recur to the scriptural way of salvation by faith in Christ, and the Roman Catholic way by dependence on the sacraments of the Church, which the priest alone can manufacture. The Lord Jesus Christ invites everyone to come to him for this salvation. Let each person consider his own way of life, and tell him all about it. To be sure, he knows it already, but it is necessary that each one of us should commune with him, if we desire that the Spirit of God should witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. If any one is in sin, tell him of it. What will he say on hearing this confession? "Repent, repent ye, and turn to the way of the Lord." What did he say of the publican who cried out from the depths of his soul, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner"? "He went away justified;" he believed in God's power and love to forgive him when he repented. When this is done with sincerity of heart, then trust him that all else will be given. The light that shineth from him into the soul will show how a new life can be built up that will have no room for sin to enter. He is the builder of this new life, and his work will be made perfect, if the material be sound. True repentance, sorrow for the past sinful life, and a desire for the life that is united with Christ in faith, in hope, and in love,

and then perfect trust in his promises, that he will give rest to the soul—if one who really desires to be saved will do this, there need be no fear. The Lord Jesus will do his part. The love of God will take the place of the love of sin in the soul. This is the Gospel, the “good tidings” of salvation with which I wish to reach my Roman Catholic brethren. Christians have their Bibles to teach them, and only need to be told how to use them. Indeed, the Bible is a “Letter from God” to every one who reads it, and it requires a prompt answer. Christians answer it by asking, “Lord, what shall we do?” And he teaches them, and they become his children and faithful followers.

Roman Catholics have another way, altogether different from this. They are not taught or encouraged to read the Bible; they only know that they must go to the priest to learn the way of salvation, and they must depend on him for the means of obtaining it. The Protestant looks to Christ alone as the Mediator and loving Redeemer, and depends on him, to the exclusion of all other means. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” The New Testament tells us what he was, what he did and what he said. There is none other like him, never was, and never will be. It is through him and by him that the door of Heaven is opened to

us. My Roman Catholic brethren depend on the priests to do this for them. God help them! If they really knew what the priests are they would not rely much on them to gain them admission to Heaven. Your Church teaches the people that it does not matter whether priests be good or bad men so long as they perform their duty; the sacraments of the Church are self-working (*ex opere operato*), the theologians say. But who knows that the priests perform their functions according to the stated formula?

Do all the priests in America pronounce the words of absolution over the penitent at confession, or say the words of consecration at the mass on Sundays? No one knows. The people do not understand the Latin they mumble at these ceremonies. "But all priests are honorable men, and gentlemen who would be incapable of deception," my Roman Catholic friends who read this will say. Are they? I have known 1,000 priests in my time, hundreds of them intimately, and not a few bishops, and I must say that I did not find them all "honorable men." But reserving my experience of priests in general for another occasion, let me call your attention to some of the priests who have recently figured in public in our neighboring city of Brooklyn, and if straws show how the wind blows, we can form an estimate of the material of which priests are made.

Last week, May 4th, 1883, Father Philip Kenny

came into court and sued against the estate of the late Father Robert Maguire, claiming \$12,000 for masses that he had said for the soul of the deceased. Father Maguire has been dead only two years, and it is a mystery how Father Kenny could say \$12,000 worth of masses in that period, unless, indeed, he charged \$100 for every mass. The court refused to grant the amount asked for, and Father Kenny threatens that if he is not paid he will recall every one of those masses and leave poor Father Maguire's soul in purgatory until it is burned to a cinder. The relatives of the deceased want the money, and will not give one cent of it for helping him out of purgatory. We learn that great scandal is the result, and that the members of Father Kenny's church are in danger of losing their faith. Purgatory is a rock on which the faith of many Roman Catholics will be shattered. How can it be otherwise? The falsehood and deception practiced by means of this infamous traffic in souls will cause the people to turn away in disgust from the Church built upon it.

I write as one who had been a priest of your Church until a few years since, and every Roman Catholic priest in America knows that what I say is sure to come to pass. If any confirmation be needed to strengthen my assertion, that the people are losing faith in your Popish doctrines, I refer you to the *Catholic Review* of this city, one

of the leading papers of your Church, and specially commended by you. Indeed so far as you have an official organ, the *Review* may be accounted one. In its issue for the week ending November 10th, 1884, it has the following leading editorial article:

“Great complaint is made that the duty of remembering the souls in purgatory by masses and prayers is so generally neglected or so imperfectly performed. We used to believe in purgatory, theoretically, but, somehow, our faith now is comparatively dead. No doubt this is, in a measure, owing to the fact that we live and move in an atmosphere of Protestant hostility to the Roman Catholic faith. It is extremely difficult not to be influenced more or less by the prevalent views and feelings of the community in which we live. There is something in the very name, purgatory, that is obnoxious to our Protestant friends. They have been accustomed to look upon the doctrine of purgatory as not only superstitious, but also as connected with a system of abuses which are considered its direct and legitimate result. The consequence is that Roman Catholics too often feel ashamed to acknowledge that they believe in purgatory at all, or if they are, at any time, called upon to profess their faith in it, they do so with bated breath and shame-faced reluctance. Theoretically we believe that our friends who have gone before us to the world of spirits may be suffering the purgatorial process necessary to fit them for the beatific vision of God, and that they may be benefited by our prayers and sufferings; but do we realize it? Do we bring it home to our hearts and to our

every day experience? Some of us, no doubt, say a 'Hail Mary' for the suffering souls in purgatory, and perhaps end some of our other prayers with the common ejaculation, 'And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace!' That certainly is better than nothing; but it is not enough. What we want is to have purgatory 'opened' so that we can look into it, and not merely take a hasty glance, as so many are now doing and then passing it by."

As one reads this, Cardinal, it may seem as if your editor meant it for a joke, but he is in downright earnest. I have given his article so much space in order that Protestants as well as Roman Catholics might know in what a pitiful condition the souls in purgatory are, without anyone at all praying for them now, as was the custom formerly. If this state of things continues, the poor souls will have to begin to pray for themselves. Sadly will they realize that they would never have got into purgatory if they had done their own praying while in the flesh. But alas! it is now too late. The only consolation they can get from this editor is the exhortation in his concluding paragraph:

"Let us for one month in the year, at least, be willing to sacrifice a portion of the time devoted to our favorite newspaper that we may employ it in the delightful work of praying for the souls in purgatory."

Thus by the testimony of your own faithful fol-

lowers we see that purgatory is dead and all but forgotten. Soon all the other cherished institutions of your Church will follow the fate of purgatory, and be laughed out of the existence they now have in the imaginations of the people. Can intelligent people with the Word of God in their hands believe that the only way to heaven lies through the Roman door? We read in the Gospel of St. John, iii., 16, 17: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." Do you imagine, Cardinal, that as the people whom your Church now controls become capable of thinking on these religious subjects for themselves, they will believe you or any man rather than God? They are learning, and it is time they should, that the promises of God are true for each one of them, and that your purgatory, masses and confessions are of no use to them here or hereafter. My prayer is that they might turn to the great High Priest who offered himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, "whose blood cleanseth from ALL SIN," and who will receive into heaven whosoever will sincerely repent and believe in him.

Yours very truly,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

LETTER XXVII.

NEW YORK, January 12th, 1884.

SIR: As I write this concluding letter to the Fourth Edition of this collection you are sitting on your throne in the cathedral on Fifth Avenue surrounded by a dozen Roman Catholic bishops and three hundred priests, in presence of an audience of four thousand persons, who have assembled to do you reverence on this occasion, the golden jubilee of your ordination to the Roman priesthood.

A sketch of your life will be of interest to the readers of this volume, for you are the first American Cardinal, and your career as the chief representative of the Pope in this country has been one of marked success.

Your parents were poor Irish folks who came to this country, like hundreds of thousands of their countrymen, to better their condition. You were born in Brooklyn, N. Y., in 1810, and, so far as known, your condition in early life was in nowise different from that of the average Roman Catholic boy who is to be seen on the streets of all our cities. Whether your father kept a rum-shop, like Archbishop Corrigan's worthy sire, I know not. Archbishop Corrigan is now your associate, and will be your successor, and perhaps a greater power in the Roman Church than you

have been. He has had the advantage of you in the fact that his father made much money by selling "Jersey lightning," as the vile whisky he dispensed for fifty years in Newark, N.J., was called, and thus was enabled to send his son to Rome "to make a priest of him." That is the crowning joy of Roman Catholic saloon-keepers. If they can have a son a priest or a daughter a nun they verily believe the Lord will wink at their own lives spent in ministering to the damnation of the souls and bodies of their fellow creatures. Old Corrigan had this ambition for his son, though he did not live to see him an Archbishop; for, it is said, he dropped dead in his miserable rum-hole in Newark while measuring out a drink of whisky to a poor Irishwoman. Many a mass the son will have to offer up to bring his father's soul out of purgatory, if there be such a place, and if the unfortunate man did not go farther and fare worse.

You were ordained a priest in 1834, and served various churches in this city until you were appointed coadjutor to the late Archbishop Hughes in 1844. In 1847 you became Bishop of Albany, and in 1864, on the decease of Archbishop Hughes, you succeeded him as Archbishop of New York. Since then you have lived in this city, energetically working to build up your Church by the acquisition of valuable property and the erection of churches, convents and mon-

asteries. You were promoted to the Cardinalate in 1875, and thus became a "Prince of the Church." Your official designation is, "His Eminence, Cardinal John McCloskey, Archbishop of New York." The Pope has rewarded you with no stinted hand in the bestowal of titles and honors, and you have proved yourself his faithful servant. Not the least of your labors has been the collection of five million dollars for him and his predecessors, which you sent to Rome during the last fifty years. All this was gathered in small sums from the scanty wages of the poor Irish Romanists, who believed they could not go to heaven unless they paid you and the Pope for the grace of God and the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, which they imagined could come only through your hands.

But what have you done for your country and your God during all those years? In all the fulsome eulogy addressed to you by bishops, priests and laymen on this occasion there is no commendation of your life and duty as a citizen or a Christian. Whatever you have done has been for the material growth and glory of the "holy Church of Rome." Your Vicar General, Monsignor Quinn, in the address of the clergy sounds your praises in the following remarkable statement:

"It can be but a matter of consolation to your Eminence to recall the great and singular progress

of the holy Roman Church, which, during this period, your eyes have witnessed in this country. No more remarkable and rapid extension of the Roman Catholic faith has been recorded in any region of the world since the apostolic age.

“Fifty years ago there were in this city but six churches; now there are sixty. There were but twenty priests in the diocese; now there are three hundred and eighty. At that time there were in the whole United States only nine bishops; now there are sixty-three. Then there was but one Archbishop; now there are fifteen, one of whom has been elevated to the senate of the universal Church.

“There is, perhaps, no city in the whole world more Roman Catholic, when measured by the standard of the number of its Easter communions, than the metropolis over which you preside as Archbishop.

“It must be a matter of personal congratulation, in which your Eminence cannot fail to be partaker with us, to know that your elevation to the Episcopal and Archiepiscopal dignity and to the higher dignity of the Cardinalate, was due to the free choice of the Pope, the supreme pastor of God’s holy Church.

“Our prayer is that you may be spared to see the beginning, at least, of that triumph foreseen by the late pontiff Pius IX., of holy memory, and so earnestly sought by his holiness Leo XIII.,

now happily reigning—the triumph of the Holy Church over the whole earth.’

The address from the laity further illustrates the material growth and development of the Roman Church during the past fifty years:

“Fifty years, your Eminence, a priest of the holy Roman Catholic Church—this is truly a crowning anniversary, a golden jubilee. The coadjutor Archbishop, fresh from the inspiring presence of the ‘Holy Father’—prelates from all the land—the large assemblage of surpliced priests and the laity in crowded mass filling the sacred and spacious edifice, brought to its present state of completeness by your unceasing efforts and untiring energy, all meet and are gathered together here to-day to offer up praises and thanksgiving for the long period vouchsafed you in the ministry, to pray its extension during many years to come—to manifest their gratitude for your labors in behalf of the holy Church.

“Fifty years ago the city which is now the third in magnitude in the Union, was the rising village, set upon a hill, in which your Eminence first breathed the vital air, while her greater and elder sister lying on the other shore of the river was proud and boastful of a population of two hundred and fifty thousand souls. To-day the two just now united by hooks and cables of steel dominate the nation in wealth and influence, and in population outnumber all the other great cities of

our country on the two oceans, on the mighty river and gulf combined. What development, what growth, what expansion, since the day your Eminence entered upon the sacred duties of the priesthood! Side by side with this unexampled advance have increased also the cause and membership of the Roman Catholic community.

“When a priest first visited this island of New York—even then a busy mart—the number of the laity was only two. Fifty years ago the churches were less than six, the clergy were few and there was one religious institution; colleges were not and Roman Catholic schools were well nigh unknown. Now churches and chapels are counted by scores—priests by the hundred and the laity by hundreds of thousands. Roman Catholic institutions of every kind and degree have arisen everywhere throughout the city. Thus the development of all that could confer power and influence and efficiency has more than kept pace with the material growth of the metropolis. Recognizing these impressive facts, Pope Pius IX., of blessed memory, placed the Church here on a plane with the Roman Catholic hierarchy of the most favored parts of Christendom and accorded it a representation in the Sacred College. The selection of your Eminence for the exalted honor was but a fitting tribute to your life-long devotion to the interests of the Church and filled with joy every Roman Catholic heart. For these accumu-

lated blessings of churches, clergy, colleges and other institutions of learning the laity feel themselves in the first and highest degree indebted to two illustrious chieftains of the Church—your immediate predecessor, the first Archbishop of New York, and your Eminence. How thoroughly, how profoundly and how vividly they appreciate this fact is attested by their generous response to every appeal, by their pious remembrance of the deceased prelate manifested on each occurring occasion, and by their tender and affectionate regard for yourself. In commemoration of this joyful event, on behalf of the laity, I tender your Eminence their warmest congratulations, and, bowing down in profound reverence, I lay at your feet this tribute of their homage and the assurance of their loyal attachment and devotion to your person.”

Your reply to these addresses was characterized by your wonted modesty. You said you had sought no other glory than that of “the Church,” and that the secret of your success was devotion to the See of Rome and the confidence and co-operation of your faithful Irish followers.

The growth of the Roman Catholic Church in this city and in the United States is a startling fact. A few years ago the late Rev. Marinus Willett, an honored Presbyterian clergyman, whose grandfather, General Willett, was Washington’s most trusted aid-de-camp, told me that

he remembered when St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church in Barclay Street was opened for service, and as his father's house was directly opposite he noticed that the great multitude which flocked into the building was composed mainly of the working classes, laborers and servants. He thought then that the Roman Catholic Church was destined to do good among such a class, as they were all illiterate and only half-civilized. But he did not anticipate the numerical growth of those "illiterate and half-civilized" Irish in the city of his birth; and it was with ever-increasing astonishment he and other Americans saw them each year developing those qualities that have made them a power in the whole country and a menace to its free institutions. Mr. Willett saw the home of his grandfather purchased for St. Bridget's Roman Catholic Church, and a considerable portion of the large estate left by him used in paying taxes to support the Roman Catholic institutions in the city; he saw the administration of the municipal affairs of New York wholly in the hands of Roman Catholics; he saw the Bible turned out of the public schools; he saw the marvellous growth that has been pictured in such glowing colors in the addresses presented to you at your golden jubilee; and he felt chagrined and mortified that the great mass of the American people were so indifferent to the danger that lay at their doors from this foreign

power. Others have felt like him, though little has been done to counteract the evil tendencies of the Romish system. Political agitation against it has ceased, as it is a principle of liberty that the Irishman ought to be permitted to worship his Popish idols with as much freedom as is conceded to the pagans from other countries who come to America.

The true remedy for the evils that threaten America from the great power of the Roman Catholic Church is in the conversion of the people. We who have been Roman Catholics and priests of that Church are doing our part in this direction. (This is not the place to say with what success, though we can give thanks to God that our labors have not been in vain, for many have accepted the Bible way of salvation and our numbers are continually increasing. I must refer you to the pages of our monthly magazine, *THE CONVERTED CATHOLIC*, for details regarding this Reformed Catholic movement.) And many Protestants are taking the same view of the situation. The Rev. Dr. S. Van Dyke in his valuable work, "Popery the Foe of the Church, and of the Republic," says, "There are many and cogent reasons why Protestants should put forth their most strenuous efforts to defeat the wily machinations of their arch-enemy, and to give the masses the only true antidote to Popery, the simple, unadulterated Gospel. This call to redoubled exertion is

found not simply in the fact that the Papacy is by necessity hostile to the true Church and to Republicanism, but especially in its recent energy and growth. Earnest effort and unwearied vigilance are duties we owe alike to ourselves and to God. If activity is essential to healthful piety; if the truth as taught by Christ is in its very nature aggressive; if the true Church of God can fulfil its mission in the world only by conscientiously endeavoring to obey the commands of its ascended Lord; if, as every well instructed Protestant firmly believes, Popery is the uncompromising enemy of genuine Christianity, and of Republican forms of government, then most assuredly Protestants should exert themselves to counteract the unparalleled efforts now made in this New World to extend Rome's baneful system of spiritual despotism over a country dedicated to Protestantism and civil liberty."

The Roman Catholic Directory for this year (1884) gives the statistics of your Church in the United States, Canada, England, Ireland and Scotland. Taken in connection with its day of small things and weak beginning in the United States, as outlined in the preceding addresses, a summary of the present strength of the Roman Catholic Church will be of interest:

Leo XIII. (Vincent Joachim Pecci), the present Pope, claims to be the two hundred and fifty-eighth successor of St. Peter, and is recognized by

all Roman Catholics as the head of their Church. Under his jurisdiction are :

59 Cardinals, including yourself.

12 Patriarchs of the Latin and Oriental Rite.

176 Archbishops.

716 Bishops.

In the United States there are :

1 Cardinal.

15 Archbishops.

63 Bishops.

6,833 Priests.

And a Roman Catholic population of 6,482,396. In this latter estimate are included all the members of each family, and even the children of what are called "mixed marriages," that is, where only one of the parents is a Roman Catholic.

A well organized corps of monks and friars, and 30,000 nuns, or "sisters," as they are called, the best disciplined army in all the world, must be added to the working force of the Church.

Here is a great foreign power in America, governed from Rome, that is hostile to true religion, the religion of the Bible, and to the institutions of the country that it cannot control. What are the safeguards against it? The best is, to enlighten the people, who, when they are converted, will make good citizens and good Christians. Adieu, Cardinal! May you be converted is the prayer of

Yours very truly,

JAMES A. O'CONNOR.

The Converted Catholic.

NOVEMBER, 1883.

PROSPECTUS.

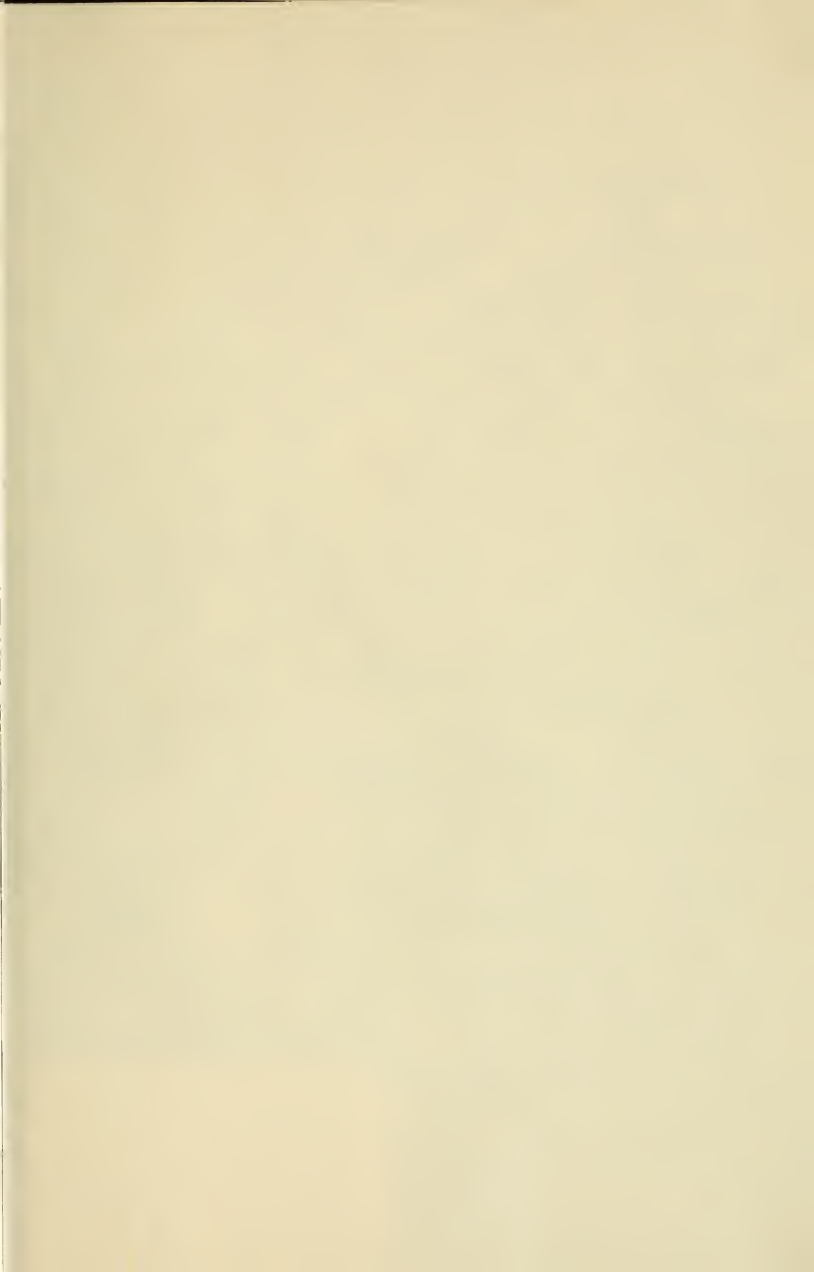
The title-page of this publication indicates its purpose. Its aim is the conversion of Roman Catholics. There are many forces at work at the present day that contribute to their enlightenment and advancement. The free public institutions of the country, contact with the American people, the positive and aggressive preaching in Christian pulpits, the general diffusion of knowledge that compels men to think for themselves,—these and other like agencies are doing a work that is bearing abundant fruit. The “Catholic World” recently said that if all the children of the Irish and German Catholic immigrants continued faithful followers of Rome, there would be now in America 20,000,000 Roman Catholics, instead of 6,000,000. It frankly avowed that a great number of them had been led into Protestant churches. For once, at least, this Romish organ spoke the truth. A glance at the list of members of any Protestant Church in America will show how many of them bear unmistakable evidence of their Roman Catholic origin. At this present writing, Oct. 2, 1883, a cable despatch from Ireland says that at a meeting in Galway, the Roman Catholic Bishop delivered a speech in which he dwelt at great length upon the fact that millions of Roman Catholics have been lost to the Catholic faith in America. The present generation has witnessed a falling away

from the Roman Catholic Church that can be paralleled only by the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The temporal power of the Pope utterly destroyed, all Germany arrayed against Popery, France freed from Jesuitism, the word of God having free course in Italy, Spain, Mexico, and other countries where the people were enslaved and blinded by superstition. In Rome itself, the very city of the Popes, the Gospel is preached and taught by a score of missionaries. Here at home priests and people are leaving in vast numbers, and still there are more to follow.

As a positive and timely co-worker in this movement the CONVERTED CATHOLIC comes before the public. It shall be the voice, not only of the Reformed Catholic movement, but of every evangelical work that has for its object the enlightenment and conversion of those whom Rome has oppressed and deceived. Writers of signal ability, and distinguished ministers of various denominations, who were once Roman Catholics, have promised to contribute articles on their own experience of that delusive system of religion, and the best means to be adopted for the conversion of Roman Catholics. With the aid of such eminent preachers and writers the CONVERTED CATHOLIC enters upon its career of usefulness under the most favorable auspices. Trusting in the Divine guidance for wisdom to direct it, and relying on the patronage of God's people everywhere to support it, it asks the good wishes of all for its success. **6 8 3**







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